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A constitutional king

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A CONSTITUTIONAL KING

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GEORGE I.

From a portrait by Kneller.

A CONSTITUTIONAL KING

GEORGE THE FIRST

BY

SIR H. M. IMBERT-TERRY, BT.

AUTHOR OF "A MISJUDGED MONARCH," ETC.

WITH PORTRAITS

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TO MY CRITICS

To those who treated my earlier effort with considerate charity I now afford a further occasion for the display of the same virtue, the greatest of the three, for which, in due course, doubtless they will receive a fitting reward. To those, if there are any, who previously dealt me less than justice, I hereby supply an opportunity for reparation and repentance.

PREFACE

As on a former occasion, it is advisable to state that this book should be regarded not as an addition to historical research, but rather as a relation of the impression created by an individual personage and his political surroundings on the mind of one who long has been occupied with political matters, long acquainted with many types of public men.

History owes little to George I.; George I. owes everything to history; for unless, by circumstances largely fortuitous, he had become King of Great Britain, he would, like many another German prince, have lived, lusted, fought and died unremembered and unrecorded.

As the first monarch who sat on the throne of Great Britain by a title derived solely from a resolution of the Parliament of the realm, he holds a position of importance to which his mediocre abilities and his insignificant achievements would, otherwise, in no way have entitled him. He has received high eulogium for the manner in which, though established in Germany as a despotic prince, he conformed to the trammels of the British Constitution and never attempted to exceed the limits set by the Legislature on his authority or endeavoured to revive the prerogatives formerly attached to his office.

To a degree he deserves this tribute; though it may well be doubted whether his conduct as a Constitutional King was shaped so much by the high-minded intention of respecting the liberties of the people over whom he was called to reign, as by the hopes that from so doing material assistance would accrue to the object of his ambition and long-sustained aspiration, the aggrandisement of his German dominions.

Historians, in the past, have differed as to the advantage or disadvantage to this country of the connection enforced on it by the advent of a monarch at once a British King and a Teutonic Elector.

Historians of the present and in the future probably will find less difficulty in arriving at a conclusion.

H. M. I.-T.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	PREFACE.	vii
CHAPTER		
I.	GUELPH.	1
II.	THE WIFE OF GUELPH.	25
III.	ORANGE AND GUELPH.	49
IV.	STUART AND GUELPH.	76
V.	GUELPH IN ABEYANCE.	92
VI.	GUELPH SUCCEEDS STUART.	118
VII.	GUELPH THE KING.	130
VIII.	GUELPH AND THE TORIES.	150
IX.	GUELPH DEFEATS STUART.	172
X.	GUELPH TRIUMPHANT.	191
XI.	HANOVER ANNEXES ENGLAND.	209
XII.	WHIG AND WHIG.	232
XIII.	ENGLAND AND ALBERONI.	249
XIV.	FATHER AND SON.	272
XV.	CONSTITUTIONALISM AND CORRUPTION.	295
XVI.	MANNERS AND MORALS.	324
XVII.	HANOVER AND HANOVER.	349
XVIII.	VALE.	367
	GENEALOGICAL TABLES.	386
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.	387
	INDEX.	391

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

GEORGE I. (BRITISH MUSEUM) - - - *Frontispiece*

From a portrait by Kneller.

FACING PAGE

ELEONORA D'OLBREUSE - - - - 22

From "Eléonore Desmier d'Olbreuze," by Vicomte Horric de Beaucaire.

By permission of Librairie Fishbacher.

SOPHIA DOROTHEA OF CELLE, CONSORT OF GEORGE I. 38

From a portrait which belonged to the former Duke of Cumberland.

By permission of Messrs. G. Bell and Sons.

ELECTRESS SOPHIA OF HANOVER (BRITISH MUSEUM) - 118

From a mezzotint by John Smith.

PRINCE JAMES FRANCIS STUART, "LE PRINCE DE GALLES" (BRITISH MUSEUM) - - - 166

PETER THE GREAT OF RUSSIA (BRITISH MUSEUM) - 214

From a mezzotint by Bernard Vogel.

GEORGE II. A CARICATURE (BRITISH MUSEUM) - - 310

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE (NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY) 374

From a bust by John Michael Rysbrack.

The above Illustrations are from photographs by Messrs. Emery Walker, Ltd.

A CONSTITUTIONAL KING

CHAPTER I

GUELPH

ANNE, by the grace of God Queen of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, and by the same dispensation a weak, easily led, well-meaning, self-indulgent, but pious woman, lay dead in her palace at Kensington.

Far away in Lorraine, first in the château on the crag, where Mary, Queen of Scots, once held her court, afterwards in the large house of the Rue des Tanneurs at Bar le Duc, her descendant, the legitimate King of England and Scotland by birth, James Francis Edward Stuart, waited, plotted, and hoped to succeed to the vacant crown.

Possessing much of the appearance, some of the manners, and none of the abilities of his kinsman King Charles II., the Chevalier de St. George, to give him his usual title, looked expectantly across the sea awaiting a summons, like to the one sent fifty years before to his uncle, to ascend once more the throne of his ancestors.

"In the flower of his youth, handsome, well made, amiable, of a disposition to be envied," writes the Abbess of Maubisson, the lively Louise Hollandine; "he lacks nothing but a better position, and that depends on Providence."*

But Providence helps those that help themselves; with one notable exception all members of the House of Stuart needed this necessary quality; indeed, the Abbess seems to have an inkling of the fact, for she expresses a hope that the Maréchal de Berwick will emulate the example of General Monck and will reap the same harvest of glory by rendering like assistance to an aspirant to regal honours.

Yet while James Stuart hoped and waited, the summons to the throne of England had already reached his rival.

* Kemble, p. 466; Leibnitz, vol. iii., Introduction, p. 40.

In the Orangery at Herrenhausen, a few miles from Hanover, Gorg Ludwig, Elector of Brunswick-Lunenberg, received a formal notification from the British Parliament that, in virtue of an Act passed by the Legislature, he now occupied the splendid position of King of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is a curious chapter in English history which led to the elevation of a minor German prince to the throne of the one great nation which at that time, as often since, held the balance of power in Europe; a prince so remotely connected with the legitimate dynasty that no less than fifty-three persons possessed a better hereditary title to the crown than he did; so unmindful of the duties awaiting him that he knew nothing of the Constitution and but little of the manners and customs of the country over which he was called to rule; so indifferent to the opinion of his future subjects that he could not utter one sentence and had never tried to learn one word of the language of the people whose national destinies lay under his control.

Yet, by the irony of fate, from the day of his birth the question of the succession to the throne of England occupied the thoughts and excited the fears of British statesmen; though, truly, at that time they knew nothing of the existence of this German prince, and, even if aware of the fact, would have treated it as a matter of little or no concern.

On the 28th day of May, 1660—at the time when the guns of Admiral Montagu's fleet heralded the restoration of monarchy in England, and the crowds of a relieved and delighted people so heartily acclaimed King Charles II. that he, with his usual cynical wit, observed: "Surely it must have been his own fault that he had stayed away so long, as everybody appeared delighted to see him"—an ugly little German girl stood in a garden at Hanover, viewing with tearful dissatisfaction a bush of rosemary out of which protruded a rag doll. Within doors the child's ducal relative lay "ill of a baby," and the event stimulated some waggish courtier to place the doll in the bush and tell the girl to look at her little cousin. "Horribly" disappointed that her beloved and favourite aunt should have taken so much trouble with such inadequate results, the child determined to investigate the matter further,

and so found her way into the bedroom where the patient lay, then, hiding herself behind a large screen, remained undiscovered until the new-born infant was carried to the fireside to be washed. To use her own words: "I ought to have been whipped, but in honour of the happy occasion I was only well scolded."*

The infant, whose first appearance in the world was witnessed in this unconventional manner, in course of time became Elector of Hanover and King of England, the founder of the Guelph dynasty in Great Britain. The eldest son of the union of Ernest Augustus of Brunswick with Sophia, the twelfth child of the Elector Palatine and Elizabeth, daughter of James I. of England, Gorg Ludwig sprang from a race which for many centuries held sway in portions of Germany.

Among the aristocracy of England, especially those whose nobility is of recent origin, a desire exists—as shown by the genealogical trees furnished to the newly exalted on their accession—to find an ancestor whose name is inscribed on the roll at Battle Abbey, and to trace their descent back to the Norman soldiery who fought at Senlac under William the Conqueror; a body of men who, judging from the number of their reputed descendants, must have been the most prolific race of warriors that ever peopled a conquered country.

Among the minor princes of north-western Germany a similar craving appears to have been prevalent, that of showing some connection with the Emperor Charlemagne. The Guelphs proved no exception to this rule, and recorded with pride that Louis the Pious, the degenerate successor of the great Emperor, took as his second wife Judith, daughter of Guelph, Count of Altdorf, whose posterity supplied monarchs to France from the year A.D. 830 to A.D. 987; a dynasty of Carlovingian kings which, if history testifies truly, was chiefly distinguished by the imbecility of its intellect and the futility of its rule.

Coming to later times—when recorded facts are possibly more worthy of implicit credence—in the twelfth century Henry the Lion married, as his second wife, Matilda, daughter of Henry II., King of England, thus imparting to the Guelph a strain of English blood on which those

* "Duchesse d'Orléans' Correspondence" (Brunet), vol. ii., p. 210.

who advocated the succession of the House of Hanover to the throne of Great Britain subsequently laid much stress.*

Henry, having incurred the undying hatred of Frederick Barbarossa, the Emperor, experienced many vicissitudes, and although the greater part of the German territories which lay between the Elbe and the Weser reverted to his sway, he died deprived of his title and shorn of most of his former dominions.

Germany, on the death of Frederick II., to use Gibbon's graphic phrase, " was left a monster with a hundred heads "; a crowd of Princes and Prelates disputing the ruins of the Empire.

This horde of petty rulers numbered the Guelph among them, who continued lost among equals for the lapse of centuries; the usual custom of the German nobility of portioning their territories between their children largely conducing to the comparative impotence which beset many families.

The evils of this system grew so insistent that frequently German chieftains endeavoured to establish some principle of primogeniture or, at least, some restriction on the divisibility of territories, an attempt in most instances doomed to failure owing to the persistent opposition of those younger branches whom such an ordinance consigned to poverty and insignificance.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century the portion of the ancient domains of Henry the Lion which remained to the House of Guelph lay within the confines of the Duchy of Brunswick, but even this remnant was subjected to further subdivision until, at the latter end of the seventeenth century, there existed Dukes of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, Brunswick-Lüneburg, and Calenberg-Göttingen, known afterwards as Hanover.

In 1641 died Duke George of Calenberg, a ruler who acted with energy and resource during the Thirty Years War, commanding a force under the great Gustavus Adolphus, and possessing, besides courage and military capacity, that quality, so pre-eminently useful and so often exercised in those days, of judging accurately the most favourable moment for deserting the losing cause.

* " History of Guelph," p. 45; Leibnitz, vol. ii., pp. 123, 235, 255.

Having himself begotten a family of six, four sons and two daughters, George of Calenberg effected an agreement with his brothers, they being childless, that upon their death the whole family inheritance should be divided into two Duchies, Lüneburg-Celle and Calenberg or Hanover; the principle of primogeniture applying to the succession, but only in the restricted sense of giving to the elder descendant the choice of appanage.

Pursuant, therefore, to this arrangement, the eldest son of Duke George, Christian Louis, eventually succeeded to the Duchy of Celle, the second son, George William, obtaining Calenberg-Hanover, while the other male offspring, John Frederick and Ernest Augustus, ultimately the father of George I. of Great Britain, remained in the dependent condition of younger children.*

A strong fraternal attachment existed between George William, the second, and Ernest Augustus, the fourth son; they possessed the same tastes, they made the same grand tour, they followed the same pursuits and practised the same vices with equal assiduity.†

The magnificence of the Court and era of Louis Quatorze created an atmosphere and exercised an influence of some fascination over certain members of the House of Guelph; military alliances with France were not uncommon, and an inclination to copy French luxury and profusion, tempered by Teutonic variations, characterised both the Dukes of Hanover, Celle, and Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. To carry out such projects most enjoyably, George William of Hanover found two conditions convenient: the possession of money and the profession of celibacy.

His subjects in Hanover, to whom he applied frequently for the first, thought, not unreasonably, that the funds they supplied might be more wisely spent if their Ducal ruler relinquished the freedom of the second and entered the ranks of married men, with, presumably, the more restricted connubial enterprises which such a condition implied.

But to matrimony, in its authorised form, George William always felt "the greatest repugnance."

A jolly prince, with a predilection for horses and a mature taste in champagne, George William of Calenberg must have

* *Cf.* Table I. † Vehse, vol. i., p. 51.

possessed some sterling qualities, for that excellent judge of men, William III. of Great Britain, showed great partiality to his German neighbour and frequently consulted him on matters of political importance; the Duke returning the attachment with equal heartiness, " turning up his nose to the wind every morning " in the hopes that a favourable current might bring his royal friend back from England and sufficiently near to Hanover to render a hunting invitation acceptable.

But, in his younger days, the appellation of " good old Duke," frequently given to him in later years, hardly fittingly applied to his course of life, the seductive and unrestrained debaucheries then prevalent at Venice greatly attracting him. Journeys to the Italian city, however, involved much expenditure; money, therefore, he invariably needed, and further reflection convinced him that money would not be forthcoming unless he agreed to the propositions of his subjects and, by tactful concession to their demands, obtained from them the desired funds; also, from the conduct and experience of his family and fellow princes, he perceived that the matrimonial fetters might be very lightly worn.

The story of his wooing illustrates a characteristic chapter in the life of a minor German court in the seventeenth century, and is of special interest to students of English history in relation to the succession of the House of Hanover.

Having made up his mind that marriage, under the circumstances formulated by the people of his Duchy, would conduce to his material advantage, George William set about finding a wife.

" Were he forced to take a step to which he always had the greatest repugnance he could think of no princess more suitable than myself;" so wrote Sophia, the twelfth child and youngest daughter of Frederick, Elector Palatine, erstwhile King of Bohemia, and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of James I. of England; a young lady of decided tastes and much force of character, her description of the incidents of her matrimonial adventures forms a highly individual episode in her Memoirs.

At the time George William of Calenberg appeared on the scene another suitor made advances for her hand: Prince Adolph, brother to the Queen of Sweden; but as he owned

a chin "like a shoehorn" and a reputation for having beaten his first wife, Sophia regarded him with but small favour and listened with attention to the overtures made by the newcomer.

After many compliments the fresh suitor spoke "the great word, asking if he had my permission to demand my hand of the Elector. My answer was not that of a heroine of romance, for I unhesitatingly said, 'Yes!'"

Having settled so easily and satisfactorily his experimental lovemaking, Duke George William, in company with his brother Ernest Augustus—a witness of all the phases of the courtship—resumed his journey to Venice. Here George William, knowing that the period of bachelor freedom waxed shorter and shorter, proceeded, without restraint, to indulge in all the illicit pleasures of the Italian city, then so much the home of extreme license as to cause a writer, well versed in the ways of the Rialto, to declare that the inhabitants occupied one half of their time in performing deeds which they spent the other half in praying God to forgive.

The sequel is natural. As Sophia herself explains, George William began to repent the promise which bound him by word and deed to the Palatine Princess; failing in his engagement to return to Heidelberg, the home of his intended bride, he, "perplexed how to find an honourable escape from his engagement, hit on the expedient of proposing to his brother, Duke Ernest Augustus, that he, as his other self, should marry me and receive the family estates, he proposing to retain for himself only a liberal income sufficient for his private expenses."*

To this proposition Ernest Augustus made no objection, but an unexpected difficulty arose in the person of Duke John Frederick, the third brother, who heatedly declared that if a large estate, coupled with the hand of a charming and interesting young lady, was to be transferred, why should he, the elder of the two, be completely ignored and all the advantage, territorial and feminine, given to the youngest of the family?

Duke George William, so the Memoirs inform us, settled the matter by the somewhat summary procedure of kicking Duke John Frederick out of the room and sending Duke

* "Memoirs of Sophia," p. 61.

Ernest Augustus forthwith to Hanover to arrange matters.*

Quickly following, Duke George William himself convened the Estates of his Duchy and informed them of the agreement which, with his brother's consent, had been made; that Ernest Augustus now consented "to bear for him the burden which he could not bring himself to endure,"† and he, therefore, suggested that the self-sacrificing brother's income should be augmented sufficiently to enable him to support a wife.

Though somewhat disappointed at the result of their intervention, the Estates of Hanover responded to the call, raised the funds required, and Duke Ernest Augustus became suitor for the hand of his brother's fiancée.

He was not unknown to her. Some five years previously, while passing through Heidelberg on his return from Venice, they met and spent much time in each other's company. The youngest of the brothers could in no way be deemed a desirable *parti;* so nothing but a mild flirtation ensued, he lending Corbetti's guitar music to the Princess, also playing duets with her, which not only passed the time agreeably but showed off "his exquisite hands." However, when the gentleman began a correspondence, the discreet young lady "was the first to break it off, fearing the world might call my friendship for him by a tenderer name."‡

Now no such difficulties need be considered. The Elector Palatine, it is true, doubted if his charming sister would consent to be thus transferred, like a bale of goods, from one purchaser to another, but the fair lady replied "that a good establishment was all she cared for; if this was secured the exchange would be a matter of indifference to her"; so the preliminaries were at once arranged and the matter settled.

From subsequent events, from hints conveyed in her own correspondence and that of her niece, the Duchess of Orleans, it may be surmised that Sophia really entertained some affectionate feeling for the elusive George William, and although, with the worldly-mindedness engendered by the life which unsuccessful and exiled royalties perforce must lead, she felt the necessity of obtaining a home and

* "Memoirs of Sophia," p. 62. † *Ibid.*, p. 64.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

a protector, yet a regretful, if not slightly embittered, recollection of her defaulting lover remained through many years of her life.

Europe in a short space of time felt the evil effects of a family compact; the House of Guelph experienced the same trouble very quickly after the consummation of the marriage between Ernest Augustus and Sophia. The elder brother George William, true to his promise, executed the desired renunciation, a document highly characteristic of the times, which bluntly declared "that the signatory made the within stated sacrifice to induce his brother, Ernest Augustus, to declare that . . . he is prepared forthwith and without delay to enter into holy matrimony, and as may be hoped soon to bestow the blessing of heirs on people and country as has been agreed and settled between him and myself."* The writer then solemnly binds himself to remain *in cœlibatu* by the precise statement that "I neither will nor shall on any account enter into, much less carry out, any marriage contract with any person"; an unhappy stipulation which produced continued distrust, malice and misfortune, finally producing a catastrophe which, for all time, must remain a blot on the escutcheon of the German branch of the House of Guelph.

The heir so needed for the welfare of the people and country arrived in good time in the person of Gorg Ludwig, called however by his mother, who nearly died in the process of producing him, George Louis, and known by the single name of George in the annals of this kingdom.

So far as the history of Great Britain is concerned Ernest Augustus would remain a negligible quantity but for one factor in his policy, the success of which in after years produced many and detrimental results to the interests of these islands, his ambition to become an Elector of the Empire and ruler of a united Brunswick, the predominant power in northern Germany.

Licentious, immoral, grossly self-indulgent,† these vices he but shared with most of his contemporaries; but the French influence polished him with a veneer of polite tastes conducive to some pursuits which won him a reputation for being a lover of the arts; a chronicler asserting that the city of Hanover owes all that remains of its beauty and

* "Memoirs of Sophia," p. 72. † Vehse, vol. i., p. 53.

splendour to the fancy and magnificence of Ernest Augustus.* He built Herrenhausen,† a bad imitation of the Luxembourg, where, as even the obsequious Pollnitz is constrained to declare, the house bears no proportion to the extent and excellence of the gardens; though even concerning the latter diversity of opinion existed, for another writer curtly asserts: "This country house is built in the stiff French style, decorated or deformed with a profusion of bad statues and clipped beech or hornbeam hedges."

His wife deserved a better partner. Not only does the Electress Sophia, to give her the title by which she is known to fame, occupy a distinguished niche in the temple of history, but in her own person she showed marked ability and some great qualities.

Many verbal portraits of her by contemporary writers exist, and, although the inference drawn by an impartial observer from her actions and her voluminous correspondence is not so consistently eulogistic as her admirers would desire, yet, in all, she still remains a most individual figure and a distinctly interesting personality.

An egregious Irishman of the name of Toland paid a visit to her Court, at which he endeavours to persuade others that he gained secret information and authority.

The modesty of this entertaining adventurer can be gauged by a letter he sent to Lord Treasurer Harley, whom he continually pestered for employment: "Instead of your Priors and your Swifts you ought to despatch me privately this minute to Hanover where you will find me as secret as I hope to be successful";‡ a request which Harley evaded with his usual dexterity.

Toland's description of the Electress in her old age bears traces of being an actual portrait, and for that reason is worthy of transcription: "The Electress is three and seventy Years of Age, which she bears so wonderfully well that had I not many Vouchers I should scarcely dare venture to relate it. She has ever enjoy'd extraordinary Health, which keeps her still very vigorous, of a Cheerful Countenance and a merry Disposition. She steps as firm and erect as any young Lady, has not one Wrinkle in her Face, which is still very agreeable, no one Tooth out of her

* "History of Guelph," p. 142. † Pollnitz, vol. i., p. 67.
‡ "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 127.

Head and reads without Spectacles as I oft saw her do Letters of a small Character in the dusk of the Evening." After a further description of her accomplishments in needlework and her generosity in disposing of the results, he adds: "She is the most Constant and greatest Walker I ever knew; never missing a Day for one or two hours and often more in the fine Garden at Hernhausen. . . . She perfectly tires all those of her Court that attend her in that Exercise, but such as have the Honor to be entertained by her in Discourse. She has bin (*sic*) long admired by all the Learned World, as a Woman of incomparable Knowledge in Divinity, Philosophy, History and the Subjects of all sorts of Books of which she has read a prodigious quantity. She speaks five languages so well that by her Accent it might be a Dispute which of 'em was her first."*

In the last sentence Toland pays a somewhat double-edged compliment, as all who have heard the extreme similarity which a German throat can impart to any dialect can well believe. Later, in an interesting digression, he elucidates the intended eulogy by declaring that the object of his admiration far surpassed the late King William, who could "never conquer his foren accent," although his mother, as likewise the mother of Sophia, was an Englishwoman.

Other sources depict the Electress with almost identical features, laying great stress upon the brightness and sparkle of her disposition. Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, who took an active part in the long course of intrigue and negotiation which resulted in the accession of the House of Hanover to the British throne, met and corresponded with her; describing her, at the age of seventy-five, as having so much vivacity as to be the most knowing and entertaining woman of her age, a description emphasised by de Gourville, who declares: "This princess has an infinity of spirit and so great a gaiety that she inspires all those who approach her."†

From her early days, if her own memoirs are to be credited, she showed a quick and sprightly intelligence. Born at a time when her parents suffered much distress, fugitives from their native land, expelled by force of arms from the

* Toland, "Courts of Hanover and Prussia," p. 65.
† De Gourville, "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 123.

country to whose crown they aspired, Frederick, her father, and Elizabeth, her mother, with their family, for years led the life of errant royalties. The difficulties of their little Court, after her father's death, are covertly described by their daughter when she alludes to the depressed circumstances which obliged them to live on the proceeds of the sale of their jewels; but such cares sit lightly upon young natures, and Sophia, happily, perhaps, for herself, took all troubles philosophically even in after life, while in her early days, as she cheerfully remarks, "Poverty had no terrors for me, the merchants provided all that I required and the care of payment I left to Providence."

A strain of cynicism existed in her nature, as de Gourville hints, which, fostered by the circumstances surrounding her early life, became so intensified by the anxieties and disappointments of her middle and later years as to permeate all her utterance. Sent away from her mother when still of tender age, "Her Majesty preferring the sight of her monkeys and dogs to her children," and not returning to her care for eight or nine years, the high spirits, the unrestrained vivacity of speech, while commending the young girl to some people, rendered her to others an "object of terror." Yet, as time went on, the charm of the fair princess with the auburn hair increased until, in the little Court at the Hague, the general opinion deemed her superior in good looks to the other members of her family; the English nobles, who shared the exile of Charles II., being overheard saying that when grown up she would eclipse all her sisters, a compliment which, as she herself remarks, "gave me a liking for the whole English nation, so charming it is to be admired when one is young."

The love of England, the pride in her English blood never left her; in later life she wrote to congratulate Lord Lexington on the birth of a son, expressing a hope that the boy would not be less honest because half German and half English, "puisque je suis mungrell mois mesme de cette manière."* Many offers of matrimonial alliances reached the young lady. Charles II., ever impressionable, made advances, "but we saw that he was a prince richly endowed by nature, but not sufficiently so by fortune, to allow him to think of marriage"; moreover, doubts evidently

* Lexington, "Memoirs," p. 313.

arose with regard to the genuineness of these proposals, Sophia, with much worldly wisdom for her age, remarking that she possessed sufficient sense to know that "the marriages of great Kings are not made up by such means."

Charles displayed less than his usual tact in his suit to his fair cousin; he told her one day that she was handsomer than Mrs. Barlow, a remark which Sophia not unnaturally resented, Mrs. Barlow, by the name of Lucy Walters, being notorious, both at the Hague and elsewhere, as a feminine companion to the exile King, whom he loved not wisely but too well.

Other suitors wooed Sophia, paid court and departed, so having arrived at the age of twenty-eight, her charms slightly impaired by smallpox, that dread and universal scourge of the period, she felt that prudence required that she should accept the best *parti* that came her way.

Then occurred the episode of George William, his devotion, his disappearance and his business proposition concerning the hand of his brother. The marriage with Ernest Augustus took place, the united couple returned to their home at Hanover, and in the course of time George William, satiated with the fleshly lusts of Venice, returned to his Duchy and took up his abode with his brother and his brother's wife. As Sophia, somewhat profanely, remarks, "C'est la Sainte Trinité qui gouverne ici"; an arrangement which seems to have proceeded satisfactorily for a while, though afterwards the aspect grew less serene.

It is to be doubted if such family reunions ever really conduce to domestic harmony; in the case where the third party is a whilom lover the doubt is accentuated.

The charms of Sophia once more operated on George William and he resumed the part of an assiduous admirer of his sister-in-law. All Sophia's tact could not avoid the friction inevitable to the situation; her husband, having an insight into his brother's character, became furiously jealous, so much so that, when enjoying his after-dinner nap in his wife's company, he invariably insisted on her sitting exactly opposite to him, and then he placed his feet on each side of her chair, thus preventing her escape to the company of her former swain.

By the peace of Westphalia settlement was secured of the succession to the various Hanoverian Duchies, and at the

same time, by the good offices of Christian Louis, the elder brother, the reversion of the princely Bishopric of Osnabrück, after the demise of the then occupant, Cardinal Franz von Wartburg, was given to Ernest Augustus.

Upon the death of this prelate, the very desirable appanage of Osnabrück actually became the possession of Sophia's husband, the alteration in the circumstances, as she herself declares, delivering her from all her troubles.

Ernest Augustus at once proceeded to assume his episcopal office, and, a more important point, enjoy his episcopal revenue, leaving his wife behind at Celle, she being considered "an unnecessary appendage." Later, however, she rejoined her husband, both of them residing at the castle of Iburg.

The novelty of the situation soon wore off; the Prince Bishop, tired with the ordinary discharge of his duties, thought a change of scene necessary and longed to return to the haunts of his bachelor days, so travelled once more to Venice, where he indulged in pursuits conducive, doubtless, to the pleasure of the Prince, though somewhat detrimental to the chastity of the Bishop.

Here, after a considerable interval, his wife joined him, and together they visited many courts and varied scenes, finally returning to Germany in 1665. On arriving at Heidelberg the news greeted them of the death of the eldest brother, Christian Louis, Duke of Celle, according to his sister-in-law's report, "a worthy prince, though frequently drunk, his only fault." Hereupon George William, in accordance with the original arrangement, succeeded to Celle, the third brother, John Frederick, taking his place at Hanover.*

Though on her return to Iburg the absence of the amorous George William relieved Sophia of some embarrassment, yet her lot showed little amelioration in other respects, for the assiduous care of the Prince Bishop in guarding the discretion of his wife's conduct did not entail equal circumspection on his own part.

About the year 1671 there appeared in Osnabrück a needy adventurer, one Charles von Meissenburg, accompanied by two daughters. Like father, like child; these women had already tried their fortune in Paris, striving, so runs the

* *Cf.* Table I.

tale, to attract the attention of the King by their fascinations. Being, as a necessary result, ordered by the police to leave France, they deemed a small German court a more favourable hunting ground than a great capital city, and so transplanted their persons and charms to Osnabrück.

With the instincts of their kind, they at once endeavoured to effect a respectable marriage; such, in their experience, affording no obstacle to their future advancement in the career they pursued. The elder, Clara Elizabeth, captured Baron Franz Ernest von Platen, an officer in the episcopal household who had accompanied Sophia on her travels; the younger of the two, Maria Catherine, married Major-General von dem Bussche, a tutor to the young princes.

Within two years of their arrival the elder, Clara von Platen, occupied the position of the acknowledged mistress of Ernest Augustus, and by her influence and intrigue obtained complete command over him, dispensing to a great extent the patronage of the State. Later on, her husband having died, the younger, Maria Catherine, performed the same office to the young prince, George Louis, the whole Court being permeated by the schemes of these abandoned women.

Sophia bore these slights and insults with philosophic patience, yet there is evidence to show that, at times, she felt acutely such unmerited treatment. Neither from her husband nor her sons did she meet with affectionate consideration, and her cynicism of thought and speech increased in proportion to the neglect she experienced. The behaviour of the Platen, the infatuation shown by the licentious Elector for his depraved mistress, drove Sophia, decorous always in behaviour, from the Ducal Palace in Hanover to the country retreat of Herrenhausen; here she enjoyed the companionship of many celebrated men, with whom she carried on a correspondence on subjects of a very varied nature, and at least showed much intelligent interest in matters covering a wide intellectual field.

She was educated a Calvinist, but never did her religious principles take a very decided form. In no way could she be considered a truly religious woman; curiosity, not creeds, ruled her conduct, and the interest she took in the schemes, shadowed by Leibnitz, for the reunion of the Catholic Church with the exponents of other forms of Christian

worship arose not so much from religious convictions as from lively interest in a highly controversial subject.

She, it is true, had been educated in the Protestant faith—which at that time mainly consisted in a bitter denunciation of Popery—and, as she confesses, once learnt by heart the Heidelberg catechism in German without understanding a single word of it. In her young days she wrote verses which were a curious mixture of frivolity and devotion, informing the Deity that, if dancing, playing the castanettes and the coquette could be accepted as acts of worship, then she might hope for happiness both in heaven above and earth below. Dean Lockyer, who was well acquainted with her, writes: "She sat very loose in her religious principles and used to take a particular pleasure in setting a heretic, whenever she could meet with one such, and one of her Chaplains at disputing together."* The worthy Dean appears to have had grounds for his allegation, for Sophia, when asked by de Gourville: "de quelle réligion étoit la princesse sa fille—elle répondit, qu'elle n'en avoit point encore; qu'on attendroit de quelle réligion seroit celui qui l'épouseroit, afin de l'instruire dans la réligion de son mari, soit Protestant ou Catholique."†

It would be manifestly injudicious to place implicit reliance on the remarks of one so prone to gossip as de Gourville, but Sophia herself, by her own testimony, engendered the belief that she held unorthodox religious opinions, for, relating to Leibnitz the gist of a conversation between her eldest son and the Abbé Molanus, in which George Louis made the admission that he held materialistic views, Sophia adds: "I am of the same opinion as my son."‡

Anthony Collins, a prominent Atheist, dedicated his chief work, "A Discourse on Freethinking," "to Her Royal Highness Princess Sophia . . . in testimony of the Author's sincere devotion (common to him with all English Freethinkers) to Her Royal Highness's person and family."

It is only fair, however, to record that the Electress found this later publication "fort inutile."§

But the impression of her unorthodoxy remained so vivid that von Ilten, a trusted servant of the Electoral

* Spence's "Anecdotes," p. 169.
† De Gourville, "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 127.
‡ Leibnitz, vol. ii., p. 163.
§ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 395.

family, who knew her well, on the event of the sudden death of the Electress, gave utterance to the aphorism: "Elle mourut fort agée et de la manière qu'elle avoit toujours souhaitée, sans médecin, sans prêtre."*

A woman of strong individuality, much liberality of thought, some want of charity, but distinct intellectual acquirements, she would in happier circumstances, with fuller opportunities, have taken a high place among the great women of all ages.

Whatever may have been the opinions, however bright the qualities and worthy of respect the talents of Sophia, neither her nature nor her mind found reflection in her eldest son. Born on May 28, 1660, the first child of her union, from an early date there are indications that even the maternal instinct was not wholly satisfied with the offspring.

Like many another baby, George Louis is described as "gros et gras"; as showing signs of great intelligence and displaying promise of future oratorical powers as evinced by his persistent vociferation; and the incident is mentioned that he obtained assistance in cutting his teeth from the aid of a beautiful coral; but the facts supplied by his biographers, at the best, are meagre and little or no information can be gleaned of his youthful years.

The good qualities of George Louis appear to have been negative, his unattractiveness both in manners and appearance most positive. His mother's description of him is not too eulogistic; her second son Frederick Augustus she designates "a Paladin, who is naughty as a little devil and fears nothing," but George Louis she calls "the Brunswicker who is 'fort doux' and makes her love him because he is so ugly."† Even this qualified admiration for the three-year-old lad soon languishes and she finds him like his father, "melancholy"; eventually the maternal remarks becoming actually disparaging, although to her other children she often makes tender maternal reference.

At no time can be found in her correspondence such pretty allusions as occur in the letter of Henrietta Maria to her son Charles, Prince of Wales, and certainly there are no epistles from George Louis himself, young or old,

* von Ilten, "Briefe, Verein für Niedersachsen, 1379," p. 156.

† "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 61.

which can compare with the uniquely characteristic little note written by Charles II. to his tutor, or the charming and affectionate correspondence which the same monarch maintained with his "deare, deare" sister Henrietta, "ma chère Minette." Some eulogistic writers assert that Sophia's marked intellectual attainments must, of necessity, have exercised distinct influence over the nature and education of her first-born. This presumption is, of course, allowable, but certainly no traces of any such hereditary colouring can be found in either his correspondence or his recorded conversation; indeed, details of the early life of George Louis are almost entirely lacking, and such incidents as are recorded afford but small light as to his nature or attainments.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, referring to him, writes of the "narrow notions of a low education," and all circumstances point to a complete absence in his disposition of interest in literature or intellectual pursuits. Yet it is obvious that he must have acquired certain linguistic knowledge; that he spoke his native tongue with vituperative force is more than once recorded; his frequent visits to Italy must surely have given him some facility in that melodious language, and French he habitually used as the medium of conversation, writing and speaking it with fluency though not with grace.

In 1675 Ernest Augustus, shedding all allegiance to France —French pleasures might be agreeable, but the French nation positively the reverse—took the field at the head of 3,000 troops drawn from his episcopal territories and marched against the Western power. Joining the united forces of the other Duchies and kindred States, in their company he participated in a substantial victory over the Maréchal de Crequi at the bridge of Conz.*

With him to the war went his son, George Louis, then fifteen years of age.

That the young prince bore himself well with courage and resolution, as in fact he invariably did in similar circumstances, is narrated in a letter written by his father to Sophia. It is dated from "the Field of Battle," and after relating by name those of note who fell or were wounded

* Havemann, vol. iii., p. 268. "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 245.

and describing their deeds of prowess, he continues: "Votre Benjamin (this, adds Sophia, was my husband's name for our eldest son) ne m'a pas quitté d'un pas, et je peux dire qu'il est digne fils de sa mère."*

Yet "sa mère," though proud of her offspring, expresses an opinion that those who transfer to George Louis the sobriquet of Paladin, borne hitherto by his younger brother, are not justified in so doing; "a Paladin should be handsome"; George Louis is not; "Car il a le visage assez laid"; moreover he is dull and constrained, never speaking at all for fear he should speak ill; still he is very brown and strong and, at times, more free with his mother than he used to be, occasionally amusing her, as "he does not tell a story badly when he chooses."†

A different and less dangerous adventure claimed his attention some five years later; no less than a journey in search of a wife.

In the whole career of George I., apart from his succession to the throne of Great Britain, but one episode, the tragedy of his marriage, excites strong interest; but one sequence of incidents disperses, for a while, the atmosphere of commonplace which pervades his personal existence, whether public or private.

There are grounds for the belief that if the designs of William of Orange could have reached fruition not only would George, the eldest son of the Electress Sophia, have obtained the crown of this country by means which would sensibly have lessened the breach in the lineal succession which afterwards occurred, but also his memory might have escaped the indelible stain which now attaches to it.

At this time, the year 1680, England was passing through a period of intense political excitement.

James, Duke of York, by his conversion to the Roman Catholic faith, aroused all the latent fires of Puritanism, the embers of which still smouldered in the national soul; availing themselves of the popular unrest, the Country Party, as the Whigs, at their inception, called themselves, endeavoured to obtain complete control of the administration and to direct the policy of the Government, whether in domestic or in foreign matters. The horrors of the

* "Memoirs of Sophia," p. 180.
† "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," pp. 249, 250.

Popish Plot, utilised for his own ends, if not conceived, by Shaftesbury, the wickedest man of a wicked age, drove the sober English people into paroxysms of mingled terror and bloodthirstiness; the King, Charles II., strong in the one unalterable resolution of his life, to gain his throne, retain his throne and transmit it to his legitimate successor, used all the resources of a subtle intellect—to which scant justice has been done by Whig historians—to allay the popular suspicion and disquietude. To this end he had concluded a marriage already between Mary, the eldest daughter of the detested James, heiress also to the throne in his default, and William of Orange, the acknowledged champion of Protestantism on the Continent; now it seemed politic to find another prince of pronounced allegiance to the reformed religion who might wed James's younger daughter, the Princess Anne. It is supposed that the youthful heir to the Duchy of Brunswick appeared to be an eligible candidate and that William of Orange himself suggested and favoured the design.

The surmise finds some corroboration in the correspondence on the subject which is extant.

A letter written by the Comte de Waldeck to William specifically mentions the proposed match and declares "that it may not be so easy to arrange on the side of England as Prince Robert (Rupert) thinks"; thus implying that the uncle of George Louis was a party to the project and that it had been discussed in English circles.*

Two years later William himself distinctly alludes to a suggested marriage between the heir to the Brunswick Duchies and "ma belle sœur," who could be no other person than the Princess Anne.

Circumstances prompted the parents of George Louis to despatch him on his travels.

The experience of a campaign, though doubtless valuable, yet conduced little to the refinement or elegance of the young prince. The raw youth required polishing; Ernest Augustus therefore sent his heir to Paris, the home of fine manners. "He is shy and too serious for his age," writes his mother; "I hope the air of France will correct that," and she expresses a wish that Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans, the

* Bodemann, "Letters of von Ilten, Zeitschrift der Historische Verein für Niedersachsen, 1879," p. 10, note.

husband of her beloved niece, Elizabeth Charlotte, may present her son to King Louis.

The rumour of the proposed English match evidently reached the ears of the Duchess, for she refers to it in a letter which she wrote from Paris, December, 1879, to her Aunt Sophia: "It is known here that your Highness's eldest prince is going to England and it is also said that he is to marry the Princess of York; since your Highness assures me it is not true I shall not believe it; next week I shall wish his Highness, the prince himself, good luck."*

The allusions contained in this missive evidently imply that Sophia thought fit to contradict the rumour, but, although after-events afford grounds for believing that Ernest Augustus and his wife conceived plans of a different complexion for their son's future, yet it is quite possible that William of Orange may have viewed with approbation the prospect of his sister-in-law and heiress presumptive to the British Crown being married to a member of a German house which already showed great antagonism to France, and that, in deference to his wishes, Ernest Augustus and Sophia raised no objection to their eldest son essaying, tentatively at least, his courtship of the Princess.

For a while George remained in Paris, apparently making but small impression on the brilliant Court of the Great Monarch, and then crossed to England, travelling by way of Holland.

Whilst stopping at the Hague he met William and his wife at the house of Henry Sidney, who welcomed them nobly with "music, dancing and the best entertainment" he could give, though it hardly accords with preconceived notions about any of the three personages concerned—William of Orange, his wife, Mary, afterwards Queen, or George I.—to learn that they "danced till morning."†

Other matters more decorous and formal occupied the time of the German visitor on his arrival in England.

On February 25, 1680, the University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Laws. "Being lodged in Christ Church he with his retinue were conducted next day by the Bishop, Doctor Fell, to the public schools,

* "Briefe von Elisabeth Charlotte" (Bodemann), No. 33 and note.
† Sidney, "Memoirs," vol. ii., pp. 145, 146.

and being habited in scarlet in the apodyterium was thence conducted by three of the beadles, with the King's professor of laws, to the theatre where convocation was then held; and coming near the vice-chancellor's seat, the professor presented him (the prince being then bare), which done the Vice-chancellor then standing bare, as the doctors and masters did, he created him doctor of laws."

Three of George's following became recipients of the same honour, and upon his departure, the University presented him with a copy of "'Historia et Antiquitates Universitatis Oxoniensis,' with the cuts belonging thereto."*

On this occasion the welcome bestowed upon the Prince of Hanover by the home of Toryism contrasted favourably with the chilly reception accorded by the same body, some thirty-five years later, to the same individual when King of England.

With regard, however, to his main object, the courtship of the Princess Anne, George failed to achieve decisive results. As to whether his manners repelled the object of his wooing, or her appearance failed to attract him, evidence differs; and a third hypothesis has been advanced by some writers, that the match no longer commended itself to either Sophia or her husband, who now entertained entirely different matrimonial projects for their son and heir.

"The King when Prince of Hanover had been sent thither with proposals for a marriage; ye proofs he then gave of a personal dislike are justly supposed to have produced lasting hatred and resentment" in Anne, who, on her own part, held "high notions" of hereditary right as "indefeasible."† The authority on which the Rev. Mr. Etough makes this and like assertions is not known, but the substance of his remarks finds corroboration from Spanheim, the envoy of the Elector Palatine, who specifically declares that George Louis paid but little attention to the object of his wooing and left her in such a manner as clearly indicated his feelings; behaviour which Anne never forgot or forgave.‡

That no definite design had been conceived is evident

* Anthony Wood, "Fasti," vol. iv., pp. 377, 378.
† Birch MSS., British Museum, 4326B.
‡ *Historical Review*, vol. ii., p. 760.

ELEONORA D'OLBRUSE.

From an etching by Gaujean.

from a letter which George Louis himself wrote to his mother on his arrival in England, which is still preserved in the correspondence collected by her secretary, Gargan. From this communication the information can be obtained that, although when in London King Charles II. with his usual urbanity and charm received his German relative in a personal audience, yet he knew nothing of the arrangements made concerning the visit, and took no steps to provide a fitting welcome for the heir to the Brunswick Duchies, who landed at Greenwich unknown and uncared for, being indebted to his uncle, Prince Rupert, for accommodation and hospitality.* It appears hardly likely that such neglect would have occurred had any formed purpose existed on the part of either the King or the Duke of York to promote a matrimonial alliance between their own family and their newly arrived guest.

Spanheim puts forward a curious contention: that the House of Guelph considered an alliance with the child of Anne Hyde, Duchess of York—herself but the daughter of a successful lawyer—derogatory to its ancestral dignity. He declares that the Electress made this known to him by her reply to his communication "qu'on n'y estoit guère disposé à Hanovre, et entr'autres vue la naissance de la Princesse Anne du costé de sa mère, née d'une famille fort médiocre."† This idea is further developed in a letter from Lord Dover to Horace Walpole relative to Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse, afterwards Duchess of Celle, the mother of Sophia Dorothea, George I.'s unhappy wife. "It is this mésalliance which prevents our Royal Family from being what is called 'chapitalle' in Germany;" the expression implying inability to display the sixteen quarterings essential to the high nobility,‡ and Sophia herself also actually mentions the subject in one of her letters to her brother Karl Ludwig, for she alludes scornfully to "Miss Heid, as being no better born than Sophia Dorothea, the child of a morganatic union since doubly legitimatised."§

Whatever may have been the reason, George Louis made but a short stay in England. Leaving in a hurry, riding a

* British Museum, King's MSS., No. 140, p. 220.
† *English Historical Review*, vol. ii., p. 760.
‡ "Horace Walpole's Letters," vol. ii., p. 251 *n.*
§ "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 362.

hired post horse, whether from the urgency of his journey or from motives of the economy which the Court of Hanover frequently practised, he speedily reached Gravesend, covered with mud from an accident on the road, the wearied animal he bestrode having stumbled and fallen, throwing its rider.*

Making thence his way to Holland, he returned expeditiously through that land to Hanover, there to share in the pitiful tragedy which inevitably sullies his name and tarnishes his reputation.

* Jesse's "History of the House of Hanover," vol. ii., p. 294.

CHAPTER II

THE WIFE OF GUELPH

The biographer of Ernest Augustus thus portrays the character and career of the subject of his eulogy: "He was sanguine in temperament, possessing a predilection for a solid style of living whether in his enjoyment of wine, hunting or women,"* which, being interpreted in the light of historical facts, patent and evident, clearly demonstrates that the husband of Sophia lived a life neither moral, decent nor respectable. Yet in achieving the two main objects of his ambition he showed great tenacity and perseverance, never swerving from his purpose of obtaining the hat of an Elector of the Empire and of becoming the proprietor of the rich appanage of Lüneburg-Celle upon the death of his elder brother, George William.

To establish a claim to the first preferment he, upon his succession to the Duchy of Hanover, gave valuable military aid to the Emperor in the campaign against the Turks and also in the Spanish Netherlands.† But the furnishing of these contingents cast a heavy burden upon the ducal exchequer. "Every German Prince keeps up more troops than he can maintain," writes Dutton Colt,‡ the English Resident at Hanover, an unbiassed witness; to obtain the coveted honours and to render the military assistance essential for the purpose, Ernest Augustus knew full well that he must acquire additional territory to supply the forces and augmented wealth to maintain them.

By the family compact the very desirable heritage of Lüneburg-Celle, on the death of George William without heirs, devolved upon his younger brother, the said Ernest Augustus, who, moreover, confidently expected to obtain the succession to the other Duchy, Hanover-Göttingen, the then possessor, John Frederick, being, as Sophia complacently remarks, "too fat ever to have any children."

* Vehse, vol. i., p. 53. † *Ibid.*, p. 170.
‡ Dutton Colt's Letters, Record Office.

This prognostication proved true; in 1679 John Frederick —who some few years anterior became a convert to the Roman Catholic Church—on his way to Venice contracted a mortal disease, or fell a victim to his own excesses, and his Duchy thus devolved upon Ernest Augustus, who greeted the announcement of his brother's demise with a shrug of his shoulders and the philosophic comment: "I am glad it was not I who died."*

This profitable bereavement appeared to assure to the aspiring prince the full realisation of his hopes, for as long as his elder brother kept to his pact and refrained from marrying, so long the inheritance of the coveted Celle also seemed to be secure.

But a cloud appeared upon the serene horizon.

George William, ever self-indulgent, "venait pour les hivers se divertir" to the Hague. On one of these pleasurable excursions the jovial bachelor, then Duke of Hanover, met with a lovely French girl, Eleonora d'Esmier, the daughter of Alexandre d'Esmier, Seigneur d'Olbreuse, the head of a noble family in Lower Poitou.

Eleonora occupied at one time the post of *demoiselle d'honneur* to the celebrated Marie de la Tour, who, retiring from the gay world of Paris to assume a stricter course of life, assigned the services of Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse to her daughter-in-law, Emilie de Hesse Cassel, the wife of Henri de la Trémouille, Prince de Tarente and Duc de Thouars. Whilst in attendance on this lady, whose diary furnishes evidence concerning the whole story, George William met Eleonora and became greatly enamoured of her charms.

Little doubt exists that the amorous Duke sought the assistance of his sister-in-law Sophia for the purpose of inducing the beautiful girl to place herself in a position where her admirer could proceed without hindrance with his designs. Sophia, to her lasting discredit, at once complied and invited Eleonora to become one of her own ladies-in-waiting. "I was only too happy," she unblushingly confesses, "to provide him with any amusement that served to turn his thoughts from myself."†

That she knew full well the proclivities of her brother-in-law and that she unhesitatingly intended to sacrifice the

* "Memoirs of Sophia," p. 253.

† *Ibid.*, p. 149.

girl to his sensual propensities is proved by a letter which she wrote later, in which she reproaches herself for her folly " in making such a blunder and calling to our court that dirty rag, the more so as we had at hand ' the Biegle,' whom William liked well enough, though she was not so fascinating as this French vixen, who really is a splendid Stück Fleisch."*

At that time, however, the tact and good sense, if not the innocence, of Eleonora caused her to escape the snare by declining the post offered to her, and further strenuous efforts alone could overcome her resistance to the ducal advances.

In 1664 George William wrote to the Princesse de Tarente: " Qu'il avait résolu de tenir ménage avec Mademoiselle D'Olbreuse."† That the beauty and intellectual accomplishments of the young lady excited real admiration and affection in the heart of her susceptible wooer is proved by his devoted attachment to her during the long continuance of their married life, and little doubt exists that, but for the bitter opposition and continued pressure brought to bear by Ernest Augustus and Sophia, George William would at once have married the fair French girl with the full rites of the Church, even if " ad morganaticum," to use the accepted phrase.

Some sort of ceremony evidently took place; Sophia—every page of whose correspondence in which her sister-in-law is mentioned teems with inuendo and misrepresentation—states distinctly that the matter was concluded by an " anti-contract " of marriage in which the Duke pledged himself for ever to Eleonora and settled a handsome dowry upon her; the document being signed by Ernest Augustus and Sophia herself in addition to the wedded couple. Alluding to this, Sophia, in a letter to her brother, the Elector Palatine, relates: " Le mariage de conscience entre le Duc George Guillaume et l'Olbreuse est publié quoique la consummation a esté faite à la sourdine sans chandelle ny tesmoins ";‡ while to another correspondent she characteristically remarks: " Religious minded people consider this a marriage before God; being more sceptical I prefer it should be before God than before man."§

* Baroness von Amstell, *Nineteenth Century*, 1898.
† " Archives Historiques de Poitou," tome iv., p. 362.
‡ " Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 95. § *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Yet at this period she admits that she thought highly of the fascinating Frenchwoman; she describes her as "grave and dignified in manner, her face beautiful, her figure tall and commanding; she spoke little but expressed herself well; altogether she pleased me extremely."*

The attitude adopted by her ducal relations by marriage towards Madame de Harburg—such being the title allotted to Mademoiselle d'Olbreuse after the ceremony—can be estimated by the household provided for her and the procedure adopted for the intercourse between the two families. One lady-in-waiting was assigned, her sister Angélique, "very disagreeable and countrified," and "3 femmes de chambre." "She has a carriage with six horses, but has to ride alone. I (Sophia) never eat in ceremony with her, but always at a round table; she sometimes sits by my side on my left, George William on my right (she never has an armchair). She lives with me as she ought and is very well brought up and knows how to live with people of position."†

So long as the connection between the Duke of Celle and Mlle. d'Olbreuse remained in this somewhat equivocal position, his family behaved with decency towards the lady, although stories are related of petty slights and annoyances which she underwent at the hands of Sophia and others, but the moment that the prospect of the birth of an heir suggested the possibility of losing the long-coveted inheritance of Celle and its rich appurtenances, the attitude of both Ernest Augustus and his wife became marked with the most acrid hostility.

In September, 1666, Madame de Harburg bore a daughter, named Sophia Dorothea, with whose lot the history of Great Britain is indissolubly linked.

About six hours' journey, in those days, from Hanover, lay the Duchy of Wolfenbüttel, ruled by a senior branch of the House of Brunswick. Duke Anton Ulrich of that place—himself a younger brother of the reigning prince, with a younger brother's portion—in 1671, on behalf of his eldest son Augustus Frederick, aged sixteen, made proposals to their rich kinsfolk at Celle for the hand of the infant daughter, then five years old, doubtless a charming

* "Memoirs of Sophia," p. 150.

† "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 120.

girl, but whose immature attractions were enhanced by her being the prospective owner of much of the paternal wealth.

George William gladly assented to the offer of such close connection with an honoured and nearly allied house, but under the circumstances he desired to regularise his child's ambiguous position and remove the bend sinister of illegitimacy which still clung to her.

This process was not infrequent in Germany, the Emperor, in such cases, often granting a dispensation; as Pollnitz writes: "By the law of Germany a prince of a sovereign family can marry none but a Princess or a Countess. If he wed a private gentlewoman, he not only marries below himself but his wife does not go by his name and the children of the marriage cannot succeed him unless the Emperor declare the mother a Princess, as he commonly does in favour of Princes of antient Family."* In this case, probably, no legal espousal had taken place which could be recognised, therefore the obvious, as well as the honourable, course to pursue lay in the direction of celebrating, with all necessary accompaniment, a new union.

Schutz, the Chancellor of Celle, suggested this proceeding to his ducal master, who readily adopted that which years before he vehemently desired to do, only being stopped then by the opposition of his favourite brother, Ernest Augustus. But the bare thought of a regular alliance caused the bitterest animosity in the Prince Bishop and his wife. With feminine malice Sophia violently assailed all connected with the proposal, especially pouring her vials of wrath on Schutz, the Chancellor, who in addition to other crimes she charges with embezzling a portion of the money necessary for the legal formalities.

From that time forward Madame de Harburg received nothing but insult and contumely from her husband's kinsfolk at Hanover; this attitude being in no way mitigated when, in the spring of 1676, George William, making such amends as lay in his power, married with all necessary ceremony the talented and beautiful lady of whom, under any circumstances, it might be said, as de Grammont wittily replied to a disparaging remark concerning her: "Eh bien, elle est encore assez bonne pour un prince allemand."

For a period after this fresh marriage Eleonora bore the

* Pollnitz, vol. i., p. 60.

title of Countess of Wilhelmburg, her children, actual and prospective, being entitled also to the rank of count and countess of the Empire, but in 1680 the Emperor, charmed, so it was reported, by a personal interview, created her Duchess of Celle, and this designation she bore till her death.

The female portion of the family of the Elector Palatine, in addition to many individual characteristics, possessed in a marked degree a power of invective more animated than amiable. The treatment the Duchess of Celle received from the lips and pens of Sophia and her niece, the Duchess of Orleans, can be read in the correspondence of the latter, a woman who, by her own showing, combined a tongue reminiscent of the dialect of the fish-market with a mind redolent of the odours of a cesspit. Such rancorous abuse as these high-born German ladies permitted themselves transcended even the most impure phraseology of a singularly coarse period. They constantly designate the object of their hatred by expressions which a decorous translator has diluted into "a little clod of dirt"; and the Duchess of Orleans, whilst alleging a distinct and palpable untruth, that Mlle. d'Olbreuse, as lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Tarente, performed menial offices to the Princess's husband, is not ashamed to declare that the marriage of such a "piece of flesh"—with a singularly immoral and grossly sensual minor prince, be it remembered—did so great a wrong to the latter as to deserve the description of "a sin against the Holy Ghost."*

French spirit and vivacity could hardly be expected to bear such treatment with meekness and resignation. There are indications to be found that Eleonora occasionally not only defended herself with success but even carried the attack into the enemies' country. In her letters ludicrous descriptions may be read of the manners, or want of manners, shown at the ducal table, and satirical remarks are made on the coarse heavy food and drink with which the distinguished ducal personages habitually and copiously regaled themselves; the chief articles of their menu consisting of "greasy sausages, a queer compound of heavy beer and onions, and a farinaceous mess of ginger and cloves all washed down by floods of muddy beer."†

* "Briefe von Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 16.

† Baroness von Amstell, *Nineteenth Century*, 1898.

Whether or no the picture is too highly coloured cannot now be ascertained, but to a degree corroboration is supplied by the Duchess of Orleans herself—Madame, to give her the designation usually accorded her in the annals of the French Court—who, in a letter to the Raugravin Louise, makes confession that, though for thirty years she has lived in France, she never could accustom herself to the cooking, and "have so brought up my German belly to regard German food as dainties that I now cannot eat a single French ragout." Later on, reminiscent of past delights, she rapturously writes: "A good plate of sauer kraut and of smoked sausage is a dish worthy of a King, but a soup of cabbage and grease does my business much better than all the delicacies they dote on here . . . if you wish to give pleasure let me have a good sup of beer"; then adds regretfully: "but this cannot be got here, French beer is worth nothing."*

Smarting herself under the forced *mésalliance* of her own son, Philippe le Débonnaire, afterwards the Regent, with Mlle. de Blois, the illegitimate daughter of Louis XIV., Madame continued for many years to pour contempt and vitriolic abuse upon the French lady whom the Duke of Celle had espoused: "She was of extremely obscure birth; it would have been an honour for her to have married my *premier valet de chambre*"; a statement which afterwards is varied by the version: "The Duchess of Celle came from an altogether common family; she would have regarded it as a great piece of good fortune to have married the father of one of the *premier valets de chambre* of Monsieur"; statements the truth of which lie in inverse proportion to the malignity, as Eleonora d'Esmier sprang from a family well born, of good repute and standing in the neighbourhood of Rochelle, the stronghold of French Protestantism.

Born at Usseau, near Niort, in Lower Poitou, on January 3, 1639, the daughter of Alexandre d'Esmier, Chevalier, Seigneur d'Olbreuse, and Jacqueline Poussard de Vandre,† she belonged to the landed nobility of France, and though, it is true, inferior in rank to the ducal family of Brunswick, yet in no wise unworthy of being that which

* "Correspondence of Duchess of Orleans" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 112; vol. ii., p. 172.

† Beaucaire: Eleonora d'Olbreuse. "Archives Historiques de Poitou," tome iv., p. 362.

she incontrovertibly is, the progenitrix of the reigning dynasty of Great Britain and the ex-sovereigns of Germany and Russia.*

Lapse of time saw no diminution in the hatred exhibited towards this lady; in 1722, forty years after the consummation of the detested marriage, Madame, on the rumour of the death of the Duchess of Celle, savagely writes: "I wish she had died forty years ago;"† and when the news proves true, she adds: "The Duchess of Celle is dead; please God this had occurred sixty years ago."‡

Yet, however bitter the abuse lavished on Eleonora might be, no invective could destroy the fact that, if by chance she bore a son to George William, the succession of Duke Ernest Augustus and Sophia to the rich and prosperous domain they coveted would be imperilled.

By the death of the young Augustus Frederick of Wolfenbüttel in 1676, the proposed marriage of the little Sophia Dorothea came to naught. Other matrimonial projects for the child, now a singularly attractive and animated girl, were put forward; the Duke Anton Ulrich of Wolfenbüttel, loth to lose such a desirable addition to his scanty revenue as the opulent dower which the daughter of Celle would certainly inherit, desired to transfer her hand to his next surviving son, William Augustus, but this match presented no attraction to either Eleonora or her daughter, who possibly then hoped for a more exalted alliance, thinking, so it was reported, of a marriage with Prince George, the brother of the King of Denmark, subsequently husband to Queen Anne of Great Britain.

Again the ambition, if ever entertained, was not realised; as the Duchess of Orleans elegantly remarks: "I must say that I am glad that the Queen, his Mother, took it amiss that they set their hearts on him at Celle, for the pride of this filthy rag (*diese Zote*) is so great that she wants a King's son and brother to take her bastard; she would be all right as a mistress, but as a wife, that would be too unseemly."§ Sophia declared that these rumours, quite baseless, emanated from Eleonora herself, who "prant plaisir a faire courir ces bruits pour en donner envie aux

* *Cf.* Table II.

† "Correspondence of the Duchess of Orleans" (Brunet), vol. ii., p. 246.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

§ "Briefe Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 19.

autres."* If so, the stratagem gained its purpose, for, as time went on and the young girl grew in beauty and attainments, the fear that, by a marriage with some powerful family, the Naboth's vineyard of Celle might be lost for ever to the Prince Bishop and his wife stimulated them to fresh designs.

If the report of Madame is to be trusted, Bernsdorff, the confidential Minister of Celle, anxious at the growing antagonism between the brothers, contrived to insinuate into their minds the scheme of arranging a marriage between the cousins, George Louis, heir male to all the Lüneburg-Hanover property, and Sophia Dorothea, the probable future possessor of her father's great wealth. Sophia in her correspondence vaguely states that certain kind but mistaken persons broached the subject, but that it lapsed owing to her husband's strong dislike to any such *mésalliance*.

It is possible that William of Orange, always an intriguer, may have suggested this marriage as well as the previous project, for his policy invariably tended towards the object of strengthening the hands of princes friendly to himself and antagonistic to France. William lived on terms of great friendship with the family at Celle. It is well, therefore, within the bounds of probability that Duke George William, acting on the suggestion of one whom he honoured and esteemed so highly, initiated, while at the Hague in 1681, the scheme by requesting the intervention of de Gourville, the French Resident at the Brunswick Court, a light-hearted diplomatist who, despite his nationality, possessed some influence both with Sophia and her husband.

De Gourville alleges that meeting the Duke and Duchess of Celle, " they opened out to me a design which they had of arranging a marriage of their daughter with the eldest son of the Duke of Hanover, so that the two estates might be united in the family." He further asserts that he himself received an invitation from them to act as intermediary by commencing the preliminary negotiations, a task which the French envoy accepted with alacrity and, according to his own testimony, found the disposition of the Duke and Duchess of Hanover sufficiently well disposed towards the conclusion of the nuptials.†

* " Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 306.
† De Gourville, " Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 102.

This account may be true. De Gourville probably acted in accordance with directions received from his royal master, Louis XIV., whose policy inclined towards endeavouring to bring the Dukes of Celle and Hanover back to their adherence to France, though, as a fact, his emissary's intervention came to nothing, the marriage not being arranged at that time.

Sophia, in her memoirs, gives the somewhat ingenious explanation of her husband's changed attitude, that, depressed by the death of the second brother, John Frederick, who died December 18, 1679, " like a good German, glass in hand "—a euphemistic manner of saying that he drank himself to death—Ernest Augustus, having by this event succeeded to the Duchy of Hanover, decided to live at peace with the one brother remaining, " therefore to grant out of generosity that which he never would have consented to do from fear."*

She implies that on her own part she took no steps in the matter, but the contrary is asserted by the Marquis d'Arcy, the French resident previous to de Gourville, who avers that Sophia herself displayed a deep interest in the success of the plan, so much so that, while staying at Celle, she got up three times in the middle of one night to come to the Duchess of Celle's bedside and talk it over with her."† Putting on one side such gossip, it may be inferred from indications in the writings of contemporaries that the match between the children of these two branches of the same house came as a helpful solution of the controversy which arose from the determination of Ernest Augustus to obtain the dignity of an Elector of the Empire.

This ambition on the part of the youngest, and hitherto the least considerable, member of the family excited keen jealousy among his kinsfolk of Wolfenbüttel and met with distinct opposition even from the easy-going George William, the attitude of the latter being a serious obstacle, as any realisation of the coveted dignity depended upon the territorial aggrandisement entailed by the union of Hanover and Celle.

Dutton Colt, the English envoy, bears witness to the intense desire of Ernest Augustus to obtain the coveted

* " Sophia's Memoirs," p. 254.

† " Archives des Affaires Etrangères ": D'Arcy au Roy, August 28, 1682.

promotion and also refers to the qualifications he possessed for aspiring to the dignity. "This Duke then has great hopes of being made the ninth Elector, this House and Celle being joined by the marriage of this Prince and that daughter." More than once in his correspondence the writer refers to the friction between the different branches of the house caused by this aspiration; "and when the business of the Duke being an Elector (is finished) I hope we shall see a perfect unity in the family again";* a pious wish not to be fulfilled, since Cresset, who succeeded Colt as resident at Hanover, remarks, four years later, that the Emperor's envoy "takes Wolfenbüttel on his way hoping to withdraw the younger Duke Antony from his engagements against the Electorate, but I fear he will succeed no better than the others who have laboured in vain."†

The necessity for the aspirant to the new honours obtaining the increase of wealth and influence which the possession of Celle would certainly ensure, the natural desire of George William not to deprive his only child of the major part of her inheritance created an embarrassing position; a matrimonial connection, therefore, between the descendants of the two opposing interests might well be considered the best and most reasonable solution of a difficult situation. Yet, though the political and practical advantages all pointed to the advisability of the match, the Hanoverian family displayed much reluctance in the matter, the bridegroom openly showing his "repugnance" to the marriage and his parents expressing strong dislike to "l'alliance d'Olbreuse."‡

Nevertheless, despite all objections, on November 21, 1682, George Louis espoused Sophia Dorothea quietly "sans Cérémonie," with little pomp and few rejoicings. For twelve years they lived more or less together, two children being born, George Augustus, afterwards George II. of England, in 1683, and in 1687 a daughter, Sophia Dorothea, named after her mother; subsequently to become the wife of that brutal madman, belauded by Carlyle, Frederick William of Prussia.

The history of this miserable marriage between George

* Colt Correspondence, Record Office.
† Cresset Correspondence, Record Office.
‡ "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 362.

Louis and his bride, the degree of guilt and shame attaching to the various actors in the tragedy, need not be told here at length, the subject having been dealt with in detail by two English writers: in a somewhat lurid manner by the late Mr. Wilkins, and, with a liberal supply of whitewash, by Sir Adolphus Ward, the encomiastic historiographer of the House of Hanover.

Bitter dislike between the parents who arranged the marriage, great incompatibility between the children who contracted it—small chance was there under such circumstances that a happy union would result.

All the materials for a catastrophe lay ready at hand! A husband, cold, disagreeable, selfish, immoral, always absent from home, hunting or at the wars; a young wife, spoilt and indulged in her mother's house, suddenly transplanted to a chill, uncongenial atmosphere, where probably she met with many contemptuous slights; it only wanted the advent of a conventional betrayer to bring about a conventional dénouement.

Years passed on. Sophia Dorothea alone at Hanover—her husband habitually engaged in military operations or amusing himself at the chase—spent a dull, eventless life amidst unsympathetic surroundings, disliked by her husband's father, not infrequently the butt of her mother-in-law's mordant wit.

The French strain in her blood rendered her intolerant of an existence of mere domestic routine, also very susceptible to admiration, although among the denizens of the ducal household few could be found possessed of such attributes as would offer the least attraction to a lively and beautiful girl, notwithstanding the atmosphere of amativeness and libertinism prevalent at the Court.

Then, in an unhappy moment, a brilliant personality flashed upon the scene.

Early in 1688 Philip Christopher von Königsmark returned to Hanover. A brave and adventurous soldier, rich, or at least with the appearance of riches, well-born, noble in aspect and well versed in the gallantries of a free and licentious age, he presented a fascinating contrast to the dry, cold, clumsy, phlegmatic George or the vinous, debauched courtiers of the Electoral household.

He may, as most chroniclers allege, have spent a portion

of his youth at Celle and there become acquainted with the child, Sophia Dorothea; certainly upon his return to Brunswick he made evident to all spectators the glowing admiration he had conceived for the young Princess.

Such a demonstration in such an age implied little or nothing; all men swore undying attachment to some fair lady other than their legal spouse; moreover, contemporary rumour declared that the handsome soldier also allowed himself to be seduced by the more mature and full-flavoured charms of the Electoral mistress, Baroness von Platen; assuredly, whether from jealousy or political motives, the all-powerful favourite gradually developed marked distrust of Königsmark and established a system of surveillance over his words and actions.

Little difficulty existed in this direction. As the months glided by the fact could easily be discerned that the open admiration displayed by the Count for the Princess met with some measure of reciprocal return which culminated, through the medium of the usual necessary and confidential attendant, in a long and sentimental correspondence.

Here are all the materials for a conventional novel of intrigue; unfortunately, to a veritable romance of this description many of the narratives which purport to describe the fate of the hapless Princess are indebted for the details and deductions.

The Dukes of Wolfenbüttel assumed the role of patrons of literature; they built a library, purchased books, encouraged the growth and purity of the German language, and one of them, Duke Anton Ulrich, himself wrote works of fiction. From a historical point of view it is a misfortune that he should have done so, for when the knowledge of the unhappy scandal spread, information concerning Sophia Dorothea and Königsmark being eagerly sought, the noble writer thought fit to include the episode of the two lovers in his Octavian romance, a composition of considerable length and equal solidity.

Being a high-born Duke, the probability exists that his productions found admiring readers; indubitably extensive sections of this composition have been annexed by certain writers who profess to relate historic events.

"L'Histoire Secrette de la Duchesse d'Hanovre," presumed to be the work of Pollnitz; the "Memoirs of the

Princess of Zell," alleged to be compiled from secret documents by a Mrs. Sarah Draper, but obviously only a mutilated translation of the previously named brochure; and the purported "Memoirs of Sophia Dorothea" by Colonel Müller, owe most of their incidents and all their inuendo to the romantic effort of the Duke of Wolfenbüttel.

No historical documents actually bearing on the subject exist, the Electoral family, following the usual Teutonic custom, having destroyed all incriminating matter which might throw a light on a discreditable episode in the family history.

But "les lettres de ma grand'mère de Zell écrites au malheureux Comte de Königsmark" were subsequently found by Queen Louise Ulrica of Sweden, the granddaughter of Sophia Dorothea, and carefully preserved. From them and other correspondence discovered in the library of Hanover, from the bitter reproaches of the Duchess of Orleans, and some few scraps of information which can be gathered from diverse sources, the outcome of the pitiful story may be deduced.*

A young and beautiful woman—coldly neglected by her relatives, far removed from the love and guidance of her mother; wedded to a dull, frigid, selfish husband who rarely visited her and whose former mistress still frequented the Court—yielded more and more to the fascination of an ardent admirer who sympathised with her forlorn condition, offering devotion and warm attachment to her service.

With malicious eyes spying on every movement; with jealous criticisms colouring every word and action; in a household where, as dispassionate witnesses have sincerely declared, "faction and intrigue are natural and in fashion," such conduct could easily be presented in the most invidious form and made to bear an interpretation absolutely depreciatory to the character of all concerned.

Increasing in intensity day by day, the malicious whispers grew, the whole Court and its surroundings vibrating with scandalous rumours. Suddenly the catastrophe fell.

Königsmark vanished, nevermore to be seen in the light of day. What fate may have befallen him cannot be ascertained definitely, though many surmises exist with

* *English Historical Review*, vol. xxv., p. 314 *seq.*

SOPHIA DOROTHEA OF CELLE.

Consort of George I.

regard to the cause and manner of his disappearance. Horace Walpole relates that the Countess von Platen, maddened by jealousy at finding her waning charms neglected for a younger and more blooming rival, watched Königsmark enter the chamber of Sophia Dorothea. Upon his return she caused him to be slain by certain soldiers of the palace guard whose services she had suborned and whom she hid, for the purpose of the assassination, in the ante-room; the body of the murdered man being then deposited beneath the hearth of an adjoining apartment.

Walpole adds further details concerning an alleged discovery at a later date of a skeleton under a portion of a fireplace in the Leine Palace at Hanover. But the tale as told by Horace Walpole and later by Jesse, who simply repeats the previous narrative, is obviously incorrect in some particulars, both writers mistaking the identity of the murdered man and confusing him with his brother, Charles John von Königsmark, who, during the reign of Charles II., contrived by means of hired bravos the assassination in Whitehall of Thomas Thynne of Longleat, Tom of Ten Thousand; the murderer and his victim both seeking the favours, amorous and financial, of Lady Ogle, the daughter and heiress of the House of Percy.

With regard to Philip von Königsmark, no reasonable doubt exists that he met with a violent death.

The secrecy invariably attached to any scandal connected with the ducal houses of Germany, and the persistent practice of destroying every document and silencing all testimony which might affect the reputation of the ruling families, create many difficulties in the way of obtaining evidence of such events, yet a correspondent writing to Jobst von Ilten, the trusted confidant of the Electoral family, is constrained to declare: " This is an extraordinary affair of Count Königsmark, that a man of his distinction should lose himself in the residence of a great Prince. This sort of thing might have happened in Paris, but not in Hanover."*

The inuendo did not remain unanswered, the Duke of St. Simon supplying a sufficiently explicit rejoinder in his relation of a story that the Duke of Hanover, becoming jealous, caused the Count to be seized and thrown into a

* " von Ilten's Letters " (Bodemann).

hot oven; the similarity of burying place—beneath a hearthstone in the one narrative and in an oven in the other—apparently pointing to some report extant at the time concerning the manner of Königsmark's fate.

This is surmise; the English envoy Cresset, however, writes in July, 1694, more definitely: "I am going to-morrow morning with a letter from the Queen to the Electress of Hanover, where they say Conigsmark lay not quite finished, but run twice or thrice through the body; I will not sware the truth until I see more."*

Yet the ambassador failed in his efforts, as likewise did Aurora Königsmark, the notorious mistress of Frederick Augustus, Elector of Saxony, sister to the murdered man, who never ceased endeavouring to fathom the mystery of her brother's death and levy retribution on his slayers, urging her royal lover to bring pressure to bear on foreign courts so that they might intervene and obtain for her some alleviation of her anxiety.

Lord Lexington, on his road to Vienna, as envoy to the Emperor, writing a couple of months after Cresset's epistle, declares that he has offered his best endeavours at Hanover towards satisfying the Elector of Saxony concerning the death of Königsmark,† but apparently his application produced no results and the mystery remains unsolved.

In other directions the same obscurity exists. Whether or no the Countess von Platen, "the daily cause of trouble and uneasiness," as Sophia mournfully confesses, contrived to take part in the catastrophe cannot definitely be ascertained, though Lady Cowper declares that the Marquis Paleotti, brother to the Duchess of Shrewsbury, told her "that the old Countess Platen caused the Separation."‡

That strong suspicion attached to this abandoned woman can be gathered from the letters of Madame, who, as early as November, 1694, alludes to the subject and insinuates that Sophia Dorothea, herself irritated by malicious jealousy, cast unfounded aspersions on the Countess; "it is not probable that the Countess von Platen should have approached such a young man as Königsmark was; I rather believe, as your Highness says, that she flattered him in the

* Cresset's Letters, Record Office, 537.
† "Lexington Papers," p. 10.
‡ "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 13.

hopes that he would marry her daughter, for he was a good match; . . . and as the Princess saw herself betrayed afterwards she imagined that the Countess was guilty."*

The tone of the above correspondence denotes the attitude adopted by all members of the Electoral family towards the unhappy Princess; the words, "as your Highness says," prove that the Electress Sophia herself, whom the writer addresses, must have submitted her own version of the matter defending, against the attacks of her daughter-in-law, the reputation of her husband's dissolute mistress.

No further evidence, documentary or otherwise, can be found concerning this tragedy, and the question most important and far-reaching naturally arises, do the ascertained facts, such as they are, point to the guilt or innocence of the unfortunate wife of George Louis ?

It is no easy task to deal impartially and judicially with the subject.

The correspondence, found at Lund by Mr. Wilkins and published by him,† also the letters printed by Sir Adolphus Ward,‡ contain many fervid utterances demonstrating unmistakably the vehement disillusionment of a young and emotional woman, miserably dissatisfied with her lot and craving for love, sympathy and solace.

The atmosphere of the Court in which she dwelt, reeking with patent and unbridled license, the character of her admirer, unrestrained, undisciplined and irregular, may, to certain minds, be a proof of guilt in intention if not in accomplishment.

In extenuation it should be remembered that such phraseology as the letters contain was common to the age; that the fashionable jargon of polite correspondence frequently uttered sentimental, even passionate inanities which actually meant little or nothing.

The only definite evidence against the unfortunate Princess lay in the design, undoubtedly proved and indeed openly admitted, that the miserable wife meditated flight from an uncongenial Court and depressing surroundings; tacitly acknowledging that she hoped, as an alleviation of her fate, never to see her husband again.

* "Briefe Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 185.
† "The Loves of an Uncrowned Queen."
‡ "The Electress Sophia and the Hanoverian Succession."

To this extent her culpability must be allowed; yet if such should be the measure of her guilt, the retribution meted out to her became wicked in its unrelenting cruelty and severity.

To unprejudiced minds no doubt can exist concerning the nature of her husband, George Louis.

Certain chroniclers have painted his character in such repulsive tones as to defeat their own object, for they fail to take into consideration the prevailing atmosphere of the times, and judge this King from the standard of perfection, a somewhat perilous attitude to assume, especially for historians. The effect of these strictures caused a reaction and produced a school of modern writers who, for obvious reasons, consider it necessary to eulogise, in all respects, the early members of the Hanoverian dynasty and to lay especial stress upon the fact that George I. was the offspring of the Electress Sophia and the progenitor of Queen Victoria; an illustration, perhaps, of the vagaries of congenitalism, but not necessarily a proof that the possession of shining virtues in a descendant implies the same qualities latent in the ancestor.

All evidence shows that George Louis owned mediocre abilities and many disagreeable traits of character and conduct. Courage, it is true, he displayed to a high degree, but physical courage is largely the result of health and training and, moreover, appertains to nine-tenths of created males, whether man or beast; coarse in nature, like his immediate progenitors, grossly immoral, his early life gave plain evidence as to the unhappy lot which awaited his wife.

At the age of seventeen, his mother confesses that he seduced a member of her household;* and it became a matter of common notoriety that the younger Meissenberg woman, a family whose object in life appears to have been to supply concubines to Teuton Dukes, acted in that capacity to George Louis for years before her marriage, and subsequently again in her widowhood; a modern writer, however, attributing to her an interval of intermittent virtue between these periods.

That the excesses of George Louis continued during his married life can be deduced from several sources, although no specific evidence of such exists; Madame, especially,

* "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 278.

inferring the fact, although she regards conjugal infidelity as the natural habit of mankind. "What shame is it," she declares, "for men to have mistresses ?"* and emphasises her own mental point of view by deriding the Duchess of Celle for teaching her daughter "such maxims as must of necessity make her unhappy, for what gentleman is to be found in the world who loves his wife only ?" The distinguished German lady, indeed, in her own direct phraseology, supplies an alternative to conjugal lapses, but modern decency renders the sentence absolutely unquotable. Although Madame never ceases, during the whole of her life, to attack the unfortunate wife and mother-in-law of George Louis, yet she does not spare him personally, evidently entertaining a strong dislike to his habits and character. "The Elector is grossly selfish, sly, and deceitful. I had plenty of time to assure myself of this. . . . Suspicion, pride and avarice make this Elector what he is."† This opinion was never modified in the course of years; indeed, the testimony of all who knew George Louis but reflects these sentiments: "Surly and reticent." "So cold that he changes everything to ice around him."‡ "Inexorable if ruffled;" "in an intolerable humour."§ Such are extracts from the testimony of those who knew him well; even the fulsome and obsequious Toland being constrained to beseech his "countrymen not to be so injudicious as to think his (George Louis') reservedness the effect of Sullenness and Pride." ||

Lord Chesterfield, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and Lady Cowper all express, though in diverse terms, the same opinion of his character, and special stress invariably is laid on his unsociability and coldness of demeanour.

It is a hazardous venture for two persons, even though of royal station, to marry who have no predilection, far less affection, one for the other and no interest or occupation in common; but to join a man, acknowledged to be sensual and immoral, yet at the same time frigidly repellent and selfish, to a girl of sixteen, impulsive, indulged and warm-hearted, is a proceeding eminently likely to produce misery and sorrow; for it is difficult to believe that an individual

* "Briefe Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 195.
† "Duchesse d'Orléans' Letters," vol. i., p. 65.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 97.
§ "Lady Cowper's Diary," pp. 132, 139.
|| Toland, p. 70.

combination, even in a mitigated degree, of a satyr and an icicle can under any circumstances be a congenial companion for a matrimonial experiment.

The "Histoire Secrette," its imitation "The Memoirs of the Princess of Zell," and Colonel Müller's biography, real or pretended, of the hapless bride, bring against George Louis specific charges of violence to his wife; that he, on one occasion, provoked at her refusal to obey his wishes, "gave way to his rage, seized her by the throat" and grasped it with such force that the Princess's women who rushed in, alarmed at her cries, had much difficulty in disengaging her from him.*

Such statements, extracted from such authorities, are absolutely worthless as evidence unless corroboration can be obtained from other sources. No definite testimony as to cruelty of this description is known, but again a quotation can be found in the correspondence of Madame, whose letters concerning her relations and surroundings, though generally ill-natured, are always pungently descriptive, which bears upon this allegation of personal violence.

"I shall not say another word about the Princess of Ahlden (Sophia Dorothea) . . . I quite believe also that the Electoral Prince (George Louis) is not brutal, he is far too restrained for that; with his nature he cannot be brutal, unless to speak one's mind is brutality."† The rumour of violent behaviour must therefore have arisen, and from a source sufficiently important, to have required such a denial from so high-born an authority as the Duchess of Orleans.

Of participation in the murder of Königsmark, George Louis should be completely acquitted. According to the evidence of Sophia and Cresset,‡ assertions substantiated from other authentic sources, he was in Berlin at the time of the catastrophe, and all circumstances tend to free him from any share in the death of the unfortunate Count, notwithstanding that Madame, many years later, when her malice became inveterate, wrote that not only did George Louis cause the assassination of the young man, but "he has never shown the least embarrassment about it;

* "Memoirs of the Duchess of Zell."

† "Briefe Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 209.

‡ "Letters to the Raugräfin," p. 121; Cresset, Record Office, July, 1694.

on the contrary, he is prepared to believe that he has done the very best thing in the world."*

In 1694 divorce proceedings were instituted against the unhappy girl. Even in the action taken in this matter, as in all incidents connected with this miserable affair, a degree of mystery arose. Instructions were given to form a special ecclesiastical tribunal, the procedure of which in no way conformed to the ordinary practice: "The Court of Hanover has gone to Berlin; in their absence probably they will judge the Princess and conclude the divorce; they never could have brought it about but by managing her so in prison that she herself desires it and so will go upon what the doctors call, malicious desertion."†

That the decision and the mode of procedure were arranged beforehand is evident from a letter written by Bernsdorff, the Hanoverian Chancellor, on September 13, 1694: "The principal point is that they, the judges, should not find out that we have secured the terms of judgment from the first";‡ and the fact becomes evident that the miserable girl, surrounded on all sides by those unfriendly to her, expressed, no doubt truly, her desire for a separation from her husband and her fixed intention not to return to him. This provided the required pretext; no evidence concerning Königsmark appears to have been given, but the declaration of the Princess, so the advocate for the Electoral Prince insisted, confirmed her intention of deserting her husband and gave sufficient grounds for a divorce. On December 28, 1694, the Tribunal pronounced sentence, annulling the marriage: Sophia Dorothea as guilty party to be debarred from marrying again; the Prince, George Louis, to be at liberty to do so.

Not content with getting free from his forsaken wife, George Louis—or his dissolute father, Ernest Augustus—proceeded to treat the wretched girl and those who served her with extreme severity. They caused the intermediary, Fräulein von Knesebach, to be seized and imprisoned without even a form of trial; the unfortunate woman for four years suffering confinement until she happened, by chance,

* "Duchesse d'Orléans' Letters" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 379.
† "Lexington Papers," p. 21. "Briefe Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 188.
‡ "Horric de Beaucaire," p. 153.

to escape and supply some of the details concerning her unhappy mistress.

For Sophia Dorothea her husband reserved a more cruel fate.

Conveyed to the Castle of Ahlden, a small dreary house situated in the flat, swampy plains of northern Germany, deprived of her children, whom she never saw again, cut off from all society fitting for her age and rank, the miserable creature, a child when she married, still a young woman at the time of her disgrace, remained in her dismal captivity, alone and unfriended, for thirty-two years until, as Carlyle says, she died nearly frantic with despair.

No entreaties on her part could obtain remission of her sentence or even the solace of an occasional interview with her children.

On the event of the death of Ernest Augustus, the forlorn mother wrote in pathetic terms to her unrelenting husband, condoling with him on the loss of his father and then beseeching: "Je le conjure de m'accorder le pardon de mes fautes passees que je luy demande encore icy a genoux de tout mon cœur, la douleur que j'en ay est si vive et si amère que je ne la saurois exprimer. La sincerité de mon repentir le doit obtenir de V. A. E. et si, pour comble de grâce elle vouloit bien ne permettre de la voir et d'embrasser nos cher enfans."*

She sent a letter to the Electress Sophia, couched in almost identical terms, but without avail, and then continued in her gloomy confinement, a lot so depressing as to call forth the sympathy of even such an inveterate enemy as the Duchess of Orleans, who writes: "I did not like to tell the King (Louis XIV.) about the Electress' imprisonment; her weariness at Ahlden must be terrible."

Her father appears to have steeled his heart against her entreaties; Cresset remarks that twice he had been shooting with "My Duke just by the walls of the house where his daughter is confined," but never did the callous parent see or speak to her or try to ameliorate her lot in any way; and her mother, who visited her whenever permitted to do so, and on one occasion, at least, contrived to procure her a temporary respite at Celle, apparently could do nothing to mitigate sensibly the misery of her unfortunate child.

* "Zeitschrift Verein für Niedersachsen," 1882, p. 254.

Sophia Dorothea may have been, possibly was, false to her marriage vow and to her husband; that husband, himself and all the male members of his family, adulterers and loose livers, inflicted on her a penalty so harsh and so prolonged as to warrant the belief that not the dictates of justice but the rancour of hatred supplied the motive for the vengeful proceedings, and that the animosity with which the Electress Sophia pursued Eleonora d'Olbreuse, the mother, now fell upon her hapless daughter; the life-long punishment which the latter endured being as much due to the personal unpopularity of the parent as to the moral delinquency of the child.

A proposition is frequently advanced that public opinion, in the eighteenth century and a few years before, regarded as justifiable in the man an habitual immorality which it denounced in the woman, and that this prevalent sentiment provided a reason, even if it did not supply an excuse, for the conduct of George Louis. The contention will not bear analysis. That during those years, in the most civilised countries in Europe, the majority of men associated with the Court or public life were guilty of incontinence to a high degree is incontrovertible, but the correspondence and, in numerous cases, the actions of prominent personages show that such a mode of life, though sometimes extenuated and tolerated in practice, was equally reprobated in theory. In France and in Great Britain many of the clergy continually inveighed against the sins of the time and spared neither high nor low in their denunciations, while the social sinners themselves frequently admitted their evil courses, although, it is true, continuing with great cheerfulness to practise them.

No monarch has been held up to opprobrium for his immoral life so much as Charles II., every Whig historian feeling it a pious duty to cast a stone at the adulterous Stuart; yet amid all his infidelities he, almost invariably, treated his wife with courtesy and respect, on his deathbed acknowledging the wrongs he did her and dying with a prayer for pardon on his lips.

No such apology can be made for George Louis. His immoralities equalled in intensity, if not in variety, the sins of his kinsman, the Stuart King; while he lacked the excuse which may be made for Charles II., the evil influence which

inevitably surrounds a prince living in exile, and thereby exposed to the temptations inseparable from royalty while destitute of the safeguards which may protect him from them.

The cynicism with which the mother of George treated his patent libertinism is unprecedented, even in the loose-living, loose-thinking epoch in which she lived. A young and innocent girl was about to be married; her prospective mother-in-law openly writes to her own daughter: "Je crois que les noces de mon fils se feront bientôt sans beaucoup de façon. Il est a présent avec sa maîtresse";* and the sardonic arrogance is accentuated, the true unworthy motive of the whole business displayed by Sophia's remark that "although the pill was very bitter to swallow, still it was gilded with the 100,000 crowns per annum; so one must shut one's eyes and take it"; then with another side stroke at the English royal family, and the daughters of the Duke of York in particular, she continues: "The example of the Prince of Orange renders it more tolerable, and as Ernest Augustus says: 'The Lord hath need of them.'"†

George Louis, while licentious in his mode of life, displayed even greater selfishness in his personal occupations; he spent all his time in warlike or in sporting pursuits, unmindful of the young wife he left solitary among admittedly uncongenial, if not unfriendly, surroundings. He showed her no affection, he paid her no kindly or even courteous attention during the time of their cohabitation, he did nothing to smooth her path or mitigate the difficulties which assailed her in the Electoral household, so prejudiced against her and those from whom she sprang. When the catastrophe occurred he pursued her with unrelenting malignity; no casuistry can place his conduct in other than an odious light; to use Cresset's words, it was, indeed, "a filthy business."

* "Sophia Charlotte's Letters," p. 112.
† "Correspondence with Karl Ludwig," p. 387.

CHAPTER III

ORANGE AND GUELPH

While the House of Guelph occupied itself in consolidating its own position among the powers of Germany, great convulsions agitated England, opening, eventually, to the rulers of Brunswick a far wider vista of imperial power than could be effected by the acquisition of an Electorate or the possession of two minor Duchies.

" The King sent for the Duke and told him that it was too much that he had played the fool once, that was not to be done a second time in such an age;" so writes Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, who subsequently records that the King, Charles II., a keen judge of men, assured William of Orange that he was " confident that whenever the Duke should come to reign he would be so restless and violent that he would not hold it four years to an end."

The prognostication proved true; the Duke, James, Duke of York, played the fool during his brother's lifetime; the skill and tenacity of purpose of that brother, notwithstanding, ensured a safe succession to the throne of Great Britain without a hand being raised in opposition; but a second display of blind, reckless folly, of complete disregard of popular feeling and ignorance of national sentiment, in such an age, brought about that marked change in the government of our country which, as Guizot epigrammatically remarks, " was as inevitable as the past."

England, under the reign of the last two Stuart Kings, enjoyed great prosperity; a prolonged peace, the growth of the commercial marine, the encouragement of a colonial system, with the corresponding substantial progress of trade and industry, produced well-being and, consequently, contentment in the people.

No great national upheaval drove James II. from his throne; by the exercise of ordinary prudence and the display of a little tactful management he might not only have borne the kingly office for his life, but have carried

into execution some at least of the designs upon which he set his heart; but, "stiff as a mulet," he forced his people to oppose him, then, at the critical moment, astounded and aghast at the result of his own folly and mismanagement, fled the country, leaving friends and foes alike unprepared for the contingency.

No national revulsion of feeling, as we regard it in the present day, disturbed the nation. Among a considerable portion of the lower classes James was not unpopular, although doubtless, in some places, a deep-seated hatred of Popery existed; but the efforts of a certain number of great peers caused the revolution, and even among them no unanimity of counsel could be found, for the fact that James ascended the throne unopposed, on the death of his brother, without a protest uttered or a hand raised against him, indeed, with the acclamation of a section of the people, gave much food for thought to those Whig Lords who so long fought against his succession.

That the bitter struggle of the Exclusion Bill, the panic and the bloodshed of the Popish Plot, should have left so little trace on the minds and opinions of the nation caused many politicians to modify their attitude and to be willing to accept the established order of things if no attempt were made by the King to alter such establishment. Even when, by his needless and arbitrary acts, James compelled those who opposed him to take the drastic step of calling in the aid of a foreign prince to protect the national liberty and Church, it may well be doubted if, but for his own want of courage and common sense, he would irretrievably have lost his crown.

Some few years later George Stepney, the far-sighted and accomplished intermediary whom William III. employed between himself and the House of Hanover, wrote to the Electress Sophia: "It should be brought home to you that the House of Lords is strongly prepossessed towards the direct line and have dared several times to complain that by the late arrangements . . . too great breach has been made in the succession";* and the fact that, on the meeting of the Convention Parliament, the House of Lords debated whether, in the resolution declaring the throne vacant, King James should be described as having abdicated

* Leibnitz, vol. ii., p. 211.

or deserted the Government, and their determination to adopt the latter word bears testimony to the truth of Stepney's information.

There were men, many men, staunch supporters of the Revolution, who regarded it not as a victory of principle, but rather as a matter for regret that events should have compelled so great alteration in the succession to the throne. Thinking thus, they welcomed circumstances which assisted them in maintaining the lineal descent unbroken whilst effecting, for all practical purposes, that diminution of the regal prerogative they deemed essential.

In default of a male heir the crown devolved upon Mary, the wife of William of Orange, who himself filled a near place in the succession, being the descendant of the eldest daughter of Charles I. and consequently the legitimate successor after Mary and Anne, the children of the reigning monarch.

Immediately before the Revolution in 1688, at the very time the seven bishops stood on trial, Mary of Modena gave birth to a son, James Francis Edward, afterwards known as the Old Pretender. Again, by his lack of prevision and tact, King James lost all the advantages he might have obtained from this occurrence and afforded his opponents a new opportunity for intrigue and attack.

The knowledge that all the children previously conceived by Mary of Modena died in infancy, that a space of ten years had elapsed between the birth of this young prince and the last infant borne by his wife, also that at this juncture the advent of a male heir must prove a severe embarrassment for his enemies and greatly strengthen his own position, would, on any other man than James II., have impressed at once the necessity of taking such steps as might make manifest to the world and render above suspicion the event then about to happen. It is true that a large number of persons attended the Queen's accouchement, but no attempt was made either by James himself or, at his suggestion, by those present, to contradict immediately the rumours which promptly arose that the child was supposititious.

This fiction, having served its purpose, disappeared in course of time, no doubt really existing with regard to the boy being the child of the Queen; his personal resemblance to his mother—" like as two drops of water " is Madame's

testimony—certifies, so far as physical similarity can do, to the fact; but during the throes of the Revolution the apocryphal character of James's heir, born and bred a papist, became a cardinal point in the creed of every Whig, who held now, as a chief article of faith, that the only hope of national salvation lay in the Protestant Princess Mary and her husband, William of Orange.

Yet still a remnant of the old allegiance to the direct line remained, and a heated controversy arose in the House of Lords as to whether the new Government should take the form of a Regency or a fresh occupant of the throne be installed.

Eventually the two Houses, after much debate and controversy, agreed on the wording of a resolution, "that King James the second having endeavoured to subvert the Constitution of the Kingdom by breaking the original contract between the King and people, and by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons having violated the fundamental laws and having withdrawn himself out of the Kingdom, has abdicated the Government and that the throne is become vacant."*

Parliament, it is true, passed this resolution, the only result thereupon being fresh agitation, new selfish intrigues, as to how the declared vacancy should be filled. Danby, an experienced and subtle politician, strongly advocated the rights of the Princess Mary, now lineal heiress, the throne being actually declared vacant by the abdication of her father and the presumed illegitimacy of the new-born infant; yet with equal weight Lord Halifax, long a supporter of William of Orange, argued that the Dutch prince alone should be invested with sovereign functions, and William himself, through his arch-favourite Bentinck, secretly intrigued in the same direction. The debates and conferences in both Houses grew in length and fervour, each party striving to effect its own end, chiefly for its own advantage; but while the Lords and Commons argued and differed as to whether James abdicated or deserted the Government, William stubbornly made up his mind that nothing but the vacant throne would satisfy his own desires.

* Journal of the House of Lords, vol. 14, p. 125; Journal of the House of Commons, vol. 10, p. 23.

Weary at the delay, bitterly disappointed that the English people did not take him at once to their hearts as a national deliverer, he called the leading peers together and with that habitual reserve which Burnet describes as a "disgusting dryness," informed them that he would hold no office, be it Regent or Prince Consort, dependent on the life of another; that if such were their design he would in no way participate, but return at once to his own country.

The oration produced the effect intended; the Whig peers had gone too far to contemplate with equanimity even the supposition of James's return; so on the motion of Lord Danby a resolution passed the Upper House that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be declared King and Queen.

From his earliest youth to his dying day, a strong and persistent hatred of Louis XIV. permeated William's nature, every effort of his life tending towards an attempted destruction of the French power; consequently, in less than two years after his accession to the throne of England, this country found itself once more at war with France, burdened with a great army and weighed down by the heavy taxation necessary to support the huge national debt which military operations on such a scale entailed.

William tried hard to persuade the English people that their interests and those of the United Provinces of Holland were identical; the thesis but little appealed to the British trader, who found no advantage accrue to him from the war, but ruefully contemplated the vast mound of indebtedness which sprang therefrom.

"National debts were things unknown in England until the last revolution under the Prince of Orange," writes Swift; and the increasing cost of public administration soon taught a lesson to the country which did not conduce to the popularity of the Batavian prince who now reigned over it. His predilection for Dutch favourites, his affection for his Dutch soldiers, displeased and alarmed his British subjects, who hated the former and made successful attempts to get rid of the latter; small wonder, therefore, that William should turn towards his old Teutonic friends from whom his policy would, he trusted, meet with more favourable consideration than could be obtained from his English Ministers.

Moreover, as time went on the question of the succession once more became of paramount importance. James, in

his exile, found noble treatment and kindly hospitality at the hands of Louis the Magnificent; the return of either the exiled King, or his son, whose legitimacy now it would be very difficult to disprove, of necessity must increase the influence of France and diminish the force of the great alliance against her which William strove heart and soul to effect.

But to William and Mary Providence gave no heirs—when, by command of Parliament, his beloved Dutch guards received orders to return to Holland, "By God," bitterly exclaimed the King, "if I had a son they should not quit"* —and the only child of Anne who then survived, the little Duke of Gloucester, showed but few signs of such vitality as promised a vigorous life. So the thoughts both of William and those who brought about the Revolution turned to the only branch in the line of succession which professed Protestantism, the Electress Sophia and her numerous progeny.

The last decade of the seventeenth century saw Ernest Augustus, the husband of that Princess, strenuously intent upon the project, now cherished for years, of gaining for himself, and incidentally his family, the rank of an Elector of the Empire.

The minor princes of northern and western Germany always lay between the upper and the nether millstone of France on the one hand and Austria on the other, the latter, though a German power, having but little consideration for its smaller neighbours. "The German Princes say the House of Austria is already as dangerous to them and their liberty as the House of Bourbon,"† writes Cresset to Lord Lexington in 1694; to preserve their independence and their influence from one or the other of these menacing States formed the chief object of most of the rulers of the lesser principalities. With the consolidation of the Duchies of Celle and Hanover, Ernest Augustus filled so important a position and possessed such substantial resources that he at least might hope not only to maintain his complete independence, but also to emerge from the position of a minor prince and wield much influence in the councils of the Empire.

As the hopes of the coveted Electorate increased all the early predilection for France waned, and the Princes of

* Dalrymple, vol. ii., p. 246. † "Lexington Papers," p. 74.

Brunswick-Lüneburg stood out pre-eminently as staunch supporters of the Court of Vienna.

To purchase the Electorate a high price must be paid; consequently the history of Hanover, from 1688 to the death of Ernest Augustus ten years later, is one continuous recital of campaigns fought against the foes of the Emperor; though with the struggles and ambitions of William in England the Duke of Hanover and his sons showed little concern.

When, in the crisis of 1683, the incursions of the Turks threatened Vienna itself, the Dukes of Brunswick, true to their new alliance, came to the assistance of the beleaguered city and despatched a force of 6,000 men, under the Crown Prince, George Louis, accompanied by his brother, Frederick Augustus, and the Raugraf, Karl Ludwig, to co-operate with the army of John Sobieski, fighting for the relief of the place.

George Louis, who during the ensuing battle fought on the right wing of the army with General Rabatta's regiment, expressed a wish, recorded by his mother, to take a still more active part in the campaign.* He did not wait long for another opportunity of tasting the joys of warfare; during 1685 a heavy contingent of 10,000 men, supplied by the Brunswick Duchies of Celle, Hanover and Wolfenbüttel, marched into Hungary under his command and assisted at the capture of Neuhäusel and the Battle of Gran.

Such adventures and hardships deserved adequate relaxation. George Louis indulged himself in his own individual fashion by paying a visit to Venice, where, if he had inherited any of the classical tastes of his mother, a somewhat doubtful hypothesis, he found plentiful opportunity of gratifying them to the full by a systematic worship of Bacchus and Venus.†

On the first occasion when George Louis came in contact with the Turks, he made prisoner, and sent home as booty, a sick Turkish soldier and two camels; in the campaign in Hungary it is recorded that he captured two more Turks, this time young boys. The first captive having committed some breach of Teutonic etiquette, drowned himself rather than submit to punishment, thus earning from Sophia

* "Letters to the Raugräfin," pp. 35, 40, *n*. † Vehse, vol. i., p. 70.

the eulogy that, had he been a Roman, he would have gained a place in history.*

The other two prisoners were more fortunate, for George Louis took them into his service as personal attendants and, nearly thirty years afterwards, when King of Great Britain, brought them with him to England, where they acted as pages of the back-stairs and, like the rest of the German household, collected as much tribute from their master's subjects as time and opportunity permitted, thus obtaining that notoriety which their luckless comrade only deserved.

Believing his interests imperilled by the Imperial success in the east of Europe, Louis XIV., in 1688, caused his forces to break into the Palatinate; again the Hanoverian contingent marched to support their friends and allies on the Middle Rhine. "Monsieur le Duc fera la campagne en personne, mon fils ainé commande sa cavalerie," writes Sophia, in January, 1689; then, later on in the summer of the same year, she again gives much interesting information about the doings of her children. Joining the Duke of Lorraine, George Louis took part in the siege of Mayence and, if current reports are to be credited, narrowly escaped wounds or death: "Scarce was the place invested before the young Prince Palatine was killed and in one of the terrible sallies the Prince of Hanover escaped so narrowly that a shot went through his hat."† Undeterred by such dangers and ardently desiring military glory he continued to play a useful, if not unduly prominent, part in this and subsequent campaigns, occupying, to the exclusion of other matters and to the complete neglect of his wife, as much of his time as possible in the pursuit for which he showed so strong a predilection.

But though the narrative of military operations is doubtless important as throwing light on the policy of the Hanover Dukes, a statement penned by the Electress, concerning the intentions of William of Orange with regard to the succession to the British throne, broaches a subject of far greater significance: "Since my eldest son has joined the Duke of Lorraine with 8,000 men, my son, Prince August,

* Leibnitz, vol. ii., p. 184.

† Ralph, vol. iv., p. 161; "Letters to the Raugräfin," pp. 37, 40; Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 68.

will command a brigade under Prince Louis of Baden in Hungary, where Prince Charles will also be with his regiment of dragoons. I have received a letter from the new King of England (William III.), who sends me word that I have every reason to be interested in the well-being of England as, apparently, one of my sons will succeed there;"* then, with her usual cynical contempt for Queen Anne, she satirically winds up her epistle by remarking: "The Princess of Denmark is again making preparations for the birth of her seventh child; all of them have inherited the Kingdom of Heaven and so placed me closer to the Crown, unless indeed this last child should get that of England."

The last child, however, followed the example of its predecessors, leaving, step by step, the way clear to that inheritance which Sophia so evidently coveted.

While his son pursued his military aspirations, and his wife occupied her mind with pleasing thoughts of the great destiny reserved for herself and her progeny, Ernest Augustus progressed steadily towards the realisation of his own ambition. By direct arrangements with the Imperial authorities, ending in a treaty negotiated by Otto von Grote, the trusted minister of the family, the Dukes of Celle and Hanover, in 1692, pledged themselves to support the Emperor, not only with their votes in all Diets and Conferences, questions of religion and private rights alone excepted, but also with large sums of money and numerous military forces, in return for which the Emperor gave a definite undertaking to invest Ernest Augustus with the long-sought object of his desire, the Ninth Electorate.

In truth, the allied troops needed all the assistance they could muster. William, the heart and soul of the league against France, made, in January, 1691, a triumphal entry into the Hague, being happier in the company of his Dutch compatriots than among his English subjects. There he attended an important conference, the majority of the German States being represented, which finally resolved, after interminable discussion, to raise 200,000 troops, Brandenburg and England each contributing 20,000 and the Lüneburg Dukes 16,000 men to the total levy; the Council further determining to press the war with all conceivable energy.

* Leibnitz, vol. i., p. 73.

As before, the promised vigour chiefly expended itself in words and subsidies, the allies spending much and doing little, while the French King, as was his wont, acting with decision, besieged Mons, the most important fortress on the frontier. Again, in the next year, a heavy blow fell on the coalition: the capture of Namur and the complete defeat of William's army at Steinkirk on July 24.

Taking no part in the active fighting, his forces being held in reserve, George Louis, in command of the contingent promised to the Emperor, escaped the fate of the regiments under Mackay, the Scottish Covenanter, conqueror of the chivalrous Dundee. By the error of Count Solms, the British battalions found themselves placed in a position from which they could in no way extricate themselves without endangering the stability of the whole line.

Beset on all sides by many foes they behaved with such brilliant courage, they displayed such heroic endurance, as to draw from William, reticent and unemotional to a degree, the spontaneous tribute: "Oh, my brave English, my brave English!"

In this campaign George Louis took but small part; possessed by an intense ambition for military distinction and a well-developed sense of his own importance, the negative result of his work stimulated him to aspire to a higher and more active command, in which he might obtain that acknowledged pre-eminence which he conceived to be his just due.

To each Power which owned the Netherland Provinces the task of ruling them presented a difficult problem: Spain, at a loss for a Viceroy, solicited William to accept the office. Knowing full well the difficulties awaiting any monarch who should attempt to govern two nations differing fundamentally in religious creeds and national customs, he unequivocally refused; whereupon, for want of a better, the choice fell upon Maximilian, Elector of Bavaria, no easy lot, as the subjoined letter from the newly elected Governor to William shows: "There has been a dispute between the Prince of Nassau and the Prince of Hanover as to commanding the right wing of the army. The Prince of Hanover wishes to do so, but the command has already been given to the former, and to take the command away would be a reflection on his character. The

Elector wishes for the King's decision, as it is causing great difficulties."* The incident related in this despatch shows that George Louis, now thirty-two years of age, though courageous and intrepid, appears to have developed those qualities of inordinate pride of birth, self-sufficiency and jealousy of the prowess of others which, eighteen years later, marked his connection with Eugene and Marlborough.

Though numerous and well equipped, the allies sadly lacked generalship. Maréchal le Duc de Luxembourg, "that hunch-backed dwarf," in all military acts proved vastly superior to "the asthmatic skeleton," William of Orange. The latter, deceived by the stratagem of the French General—a feint of attacking Liège—despatched the Duke of Würtemberg with a large force to the relief of that important strategic centre, but himself, to watch events, took up a position near Nether Hesper with the River Gette in his immediate rear.

The Maréchal could have hoped for no more favourable opportunity than that afforded by this tactical error; he at once retraced his steps and, with much superior strength, fell on William's army, thus placed in a situation from which retreat could only be effected at great risk.

But William always showed his highest qualities in moments of crisis; fortifying his position with feverish haste, he so strengthened his lines that the French troops, in attacking, found themselves confronted with a network of entrenchments rendered impregnable by the dykes and wet ditches prevalent in that country. Thrice did the utmost efforts of Luxembourg fail before the desperate defence of the allies until, at length, fearing that that which promised to be a great victory might end in disastrous defeat, the Maréchal consulted his general officers and, with their concurrence, hurled the royal guards, the world-famed household troops of Louis, against the village of Neerwinden, the key to the whole position. Wearied with long fighting, the allied forces quailed before such an onslaught, delivered by such warriors; William, a splendid captain though a poor general, fought hand to hand in the midst of his broken battalions; too physically weak to wear a cuirass, he seemed to bear a charmed life as, by his own personal prowess, a veritable triumph of mind over matter, he continued to

* Record Office, MSS. State Papers 1092.

delay the enemy until a portion of his defeated army extricated itself and effected a flight across the river.

On the Hanoverian contingent fell the brunt of the French attack, with a consequent heavy loss in officers and men, George Louis himself experiencing a very narrow escape, for a cannon shot carried away the heel of his riding boot, and his horse, hustled by the fleeing mob, fell with him into the river, whence he " did not know how he got out again"; so his mother, wearied with want of sleep and by anxiety concerning her three sons, on the first arrival of the dismal news, relates; then continues: " All our brave officers are dead or wounded, the distress that there is in Hanover among ladies and wives is indescribable."* Subsequent accounts afford the information that George Louis owed his life to the bravery and devotion of General von Hammerstein, who dismounted and gave his own charger to the Prince, this enabling him to elude the fate which befell so many others.

Both sides suffered great slaughter; the dead, buried where they fell, filled the once rich cornfields with their bodies; next year innumerable poppies sprang from the plain of death, making one vast sheet of glowing colour which, to quote Lord Macaulay's picturesque narrative, led the onlooker to believe " that the figurative description of the Hebrew poet was literally accomplished, that the earth was disclosing her blood and refusing to cover the slain."

The Electorate, long sought, now had been obtained from the Emperor, but the House of Hanover paid heavy toll for the preferment, not only in the lives of its children but also in the domestic disunion the honour produced. In December, 1692, Otto von Grote, the astute and trusted minister of the Ducal Court, received at Vienna on behalf of his master the " Kurhut," or Electoral hat, the badge of the office, and forthwith returned with the much desired emblem to Hanover.†

Yet notwithstanding this investiture, the College of Electors steadily refused by a sufficient majority to admit Ernest Augustus to participation in their functions, and it was not until ten years had elapsed, long after his death, that the full rights of the rank were accorded to his successor.

* " Letters to the Raugräfin," p. 104. † Vehse, vol. i., p. 65.

But the office and dignity necessarily entailed corresponding duties and expenses. To consolidate the territory of the two Duchies and to take such steps as would prevent the renewed division of the family heritage, without which it was vain to attempt to hold the coveted rank, the establishment of primogeniture became essential and the testament of Duke George of Calenberg, which decreed the separation of Celle from Hanover, must be evaded. For this purpose, in 1682, the Imperial sanction was obtained to the publication, in his lifetime, of the Will of Ernest Augustus, which ordained the right of succession by primogeniture and the indivisibility of the territories appertaining to the House.*

The individual style of this document merits reproduction: " As it pleases God that we, Ernest Augustus, although the youngest of our brothers, have not only arrived at the succession in the principality of Calenberg but all the principality of Celle will fall to us after the decease of George William, and therefore our paternal and ruler's office requires provision to be made that good correct order be maintained by our posterity in the succession, and we consider after mature reflection that it is not only contrary to the law of natural reason to divide the realm like a private estate but such is also forbidden in all Imperial statutes," therefore the testator feels obliged " in his conscience " to " order the succession according to the law of primogeniture " and to ordain that Calenberg, Göttingen and Gruberhagen, together with smaller dependencies and also the principality of Celle when it should devolve upon him, shall " remain for ever under one princely government and be in no wise divided again, that our firstborn son, George Ludwig, shall come to the throne in all the territories and after him his first-born son and so forth "; the younger sons of the testator succeeding in due course in event of failure of issue in the elder branch. Special provisos also were made regarding the reasonable " apanagio " or allowance which the elder brother should allow to the junior members of his father's family.

Although these ordinances received the Imperial sanction, the younger branches of the Electoral family refused, with great acrimony, to acquiesce in being deprived of their expected heritage. The second son, Frederick Augustus,

* Havemann, vol. iii., p. 295.

resolutely repudiated the proposed settlement and even instituted a suit in the Imperial courts for the restitution of those rights which he considered his just due, being aided and abetted in the matter by the advice and counsel of his kinsman, Duke Anton Ulrich of Wolfenbüttel, the most determined opponent of the grant of the Electorate to that branch of his House which he regarded as junior to himself.

Driven from his home, deprived of his property, the unfortunate Frederick Augustus, " poor Gustchen " as his mother called him, took service under the Emperor, rose to the rank of a Major-General, commanding a brigade of cavalry under Prince Louis of Baden, and in 1691 died, slain in a skirmish in Transylvania. His younger brother, Charles, an estimable and meritorious Prince, a year earlier also fell, fighting against the Turks, his body being found transfixed by a lance and hacked with blows of a scimitar. " This Prince is so much beloved both by the Duke and Duchess that his being killed will bring them with sorrow to their graves, nor indeed did I see one more generally beloved "—such was Dutton Colt's testimony and well-deserved commiseration.*

These first years of her newly-exalted dignity brought but little pleasure to the Electress Sophia; not only did she lament the death of her second and fourth child, but two others of her offspring ranged themselves against the paternal decrees, the third son, Maximilian, so far exceeding his brethren in opposition as to contrive a conspiracy against his father and, probably, contemplate armed rebellion.

Supported by Duke Anton Ulrich and covertly, if not openly, instigated by Dankelmann, the intriguing minister of the rising and ambitious State of Brandenburg, always ready to prevent by every means the growth of the Lüneburg Duchies, the misguided young man, who appears to have been the least stable of all Sophia's children, involved in these treasonable practices Oberjägermeister Graf Otto von Moltke, a distinguished official in the Electoral Court. What may have been the exact object of the design is not known, but, from some equivocal expressions uttered by Maximilian, it may be surmised that a serious attempt would have been made to disturb the existing government of the Duchy and deprive George Louis, the eldest son, of

* Dutton Colt Correspondence, Record Office.

his destined heritage. The plot became known to Maximilian's sister, Sophia Charlotte, Electress of Brandenburg, who promptly communicated it to her father and mother, with the result that the unfortunate Moltke lost his life on the scaffold, executed for high treason, and Maximilian only earned his father's pardon by relinquishing formally all claims to his inheritance.*

To judge from a letter of Cresset, the English resident, written at a later period, the repentance, however, was soon repented of and the culprit showed signs of relapse: "Duke Max is come to say goodbye . . . his father allows him 13,000 dollars when he had but 6,000 before, and gave him thirty horses to make up his equipage, but all this I believe is only to get rid of him, for fear he should revolt again as he intended some years ago."†

Like his brothers, Maximilian spent his life in the service of the Emperor, commanding a cavalry division at the battle of Blenheim and dying in 1726, having become a member of the Roman Catholic Church. Misfortune, moreover, attended his younger brother, Christian, who supported his elder in opposing the paternal settlement, though perhaps from less mercenary motives; he, Sophia's fifth child, also went into exile and, while attempting to rescue a companion, was drowned in the Danube during the retreat from Minderhinden in 1703.

It is certain that both these junior members of the House of Hanover suffered from poverty—"une bourse vide ne réjouit pas l'esprit," as Maximilian puts it—which in those days of great display by men of rank probably militated against their professional promotion. After their father's death their condition appears to have become even less prosperous than before, and the Duchess of Orleans voices an acrimonious complaint against their elder brother, George Louis, for neglecting his father's direct stipulation to provide a reasonable allowance for their maintenance: "However right his Highness may be in upholding his father's will, he cannot be right leaving his own brothers starving in misery."‡

An attack by Madame on her cousin, whom she disliked

* Havemann, vol. iii., p. 305; Kemble, p. 37; Vehse, vol. i., p. 108.
† Cresset Correspondence, Record Office, 419.
‡ "Briefe Elisabeth Charlotte," No. 451.

inveterately, must always be received with qualified acceptance, but this letter is addressed to the Electress, the mother of the person assailed; the writer, therefore, surely would not bring forward, to such a recipient, an allegation altogether unfounded, although, truly, at this time it had become a matter of common repute that Sophia sympathised deeply with her younger children in the difficult and hitherto unprecedented condition to which they had been reduced by their father's ambition and testamentary dispositions.

It should, moreover, be remembered that George Louis treated with extreme parsimony those on whose service he depended; indeed, it may truly be said that the tenacity with which he clung to money derived from his own resources found its only counterpart in the alacrity with which, subsequently, he disbursed funds belonging to his subjects in Great Britain.

An interesting phase in English history began in 1694 when the death of Mary, Queen of England and joint monarch in name with her husband, William, caused by the ubiquitous scourge, the smallpox, once more reopened the question of the succession to the Crown.

The leaders of both parties, agitated by the difficulties of the situation, almost immediately conceived the idea of a second marriage for William,* the Whig lords especially favouring the scheme, although as yet the "wound was too fresh to admit of so sudden a remedy."

A royal bridegroom, even one so dour and dry as William of Orange, presented an agreeable object to reigning princes with female offspring waiting to be disposed in life; the Elector of Brandenburg and the Landgrave of Hesse, "the only two princes of the reformed religion who had young daughters to recommend," showed extraordinary civility to the widowed King.

That wily diplomatist, George Stepney, was "persuaded that the Elector will be very urgent for his only daughter"; but he was equally convinced that the young lady "is not the thing wee want, for she is little, lean, and of no manner of education."†

The would-be bride also showed signs of bad health, a condition which might include the possibility that "she

* Kemble, p. 167.

† *Ibid.*

would never answer the great end of matrimony." The Elector's urgency therefore produced no effect upon the British sovereign and his advisers, although at a later period there is evidence to show that William may have entertained anew some thoughts of concluding a connection with the State of Brandenburg, now rapidly acquiring power and influence.

The defection of Amadeo of Savoy from the Grand Alliance, the end-all and be-all of William's existence, put an effectual stop to any negotiations with that Prince concerning the succession, notwithstanding that, through his wife, Anna, the daughter of Henriette d'Orléans, the " deare, deare sister " of Charles II., a male child of the marriage would lie closer to the hereditary right to the British throne than any other aspirant then living.

Availing himself of the rupture of relations entailed by the conduct of the Savoyard Prince, Frederick of Brandenburg at once seized the opportunity of pushing his own matrimonial schemes and, together with his family, in the summer of 1695, travelled to Cleves in the hopes of furthering the proposed family alliance.

Unforeseen difficulties, however, occurred.

William, no squire of dames, being occupied with many and important schemes, connubial ventures filling a very subsidiary place, instead of inspecting the intended bride for himself, deputed an emissary to perform the task and report upon the result.

The official description proved unfavourable, so the King of England deferred his visit to Cleves and this marriage project came definitely to an end. Once more, therefore, his thoughts reverted to the House of Hanover as the source from which a successor to his throne might spring, and he turned more readily in this direction as the defection of Amadeo from the Grand Alliance conduced to the signature of the Peace of Ryswick, an inconclusive and unsatisfactory outcome of William's schemes and sacrifices.

If Burnet is to be believed—as a rule he is not—the King concluded this negotiation without consulting his English ministers; a not by any means unlikely action on his part, for William, although he owed his elevation to the British throne mainly to a vote of Parliament, yet, in almost every exercise of his authority, acted in direct contradiction

to the constitutional theory to which he was indebted for his advancement and used his prerogative in a manner as arbitrary as any Stuart and far more despotically than any Guelph dared to attempt.

At the conference concerning this peace, Ernest Augustus, although denied entrance to the College of Electors, enjoyed the right to treat as a separate Power, both receiving acknowledgments and taking the precedence among the sovereigns of Europe due to his Electoral rank. Notwithstanding this compliment his claim to a seat in the College still met with repudiation; the King of Denmark, the Duke of Mecklenburg and Anton Ulrich of Wolfenbüttel—always a jealous antagonist to the aggrandisement of those whom he regarded as an upstart branch of his family—never relaxing their opposition to the creation of a ninth electorate.*

A more promising juncture for the full consummation of his wishes now existed, for William, taking into serious consideration the advisability of nominating the House of Hanover as his successors to the British throne, threw his influence into the scale to obtain for the head of that family due recognition in the Germanic Confederation. Yet even the intervention of the King of Great Britain could not bring to Ernest Augustus the complete fruition of his schemes, for he died in January, 1698, from a prolonged and painful illness.

The jovial Duke of Celle, George William, usually visited his friend, the King of England, at Loo every year; to his great delight, in 1698, William proposed to reverse the process and stay with him in the autumn at Göhre, the favourite wooden-built hunting box of the Lüneburg princes, some miles away from Celle. That "good old gentleman," George William, found himself in excellent health, for, as Sophia, his former *inamorata*, caustically observed, "a chimney which has been on fire cleans itself"; so, undeterred by the death of his favourite brother, Ernest Augustus, but a few months before, he laid in a stock of "the best champagne wine that ever was tasted and of five years old" for the benefit of his royal guest, who never unbent from his frigid reserve except in his moments of excessive conviviality.

* Record Office, State Papers, G.I.

George Louis, accompanied by his son and daughter, George Augustus and Sophia Dorothea, formed part of the company, his father and mother-in-law entertaining him and their grandchildren, the latter apparently making a favourable impression on the Dutch phlegm of the saturnine King.

During the visit the claims of the House of Hanover to the British throne became a subject of discussion, obtaining support and advocacy from a novel source: Eleonora, Duchess of Celle, availing herself of the position of hostess to her royal guest, pressed on his consideration the title of George Louis and his offspring.

Probably by this effort the unhappy mother strove to lighten the lot of her miserable daughter, to soften the asperity of that wretched girl's husband by endeavouring to augment the political fortune of his House and family. She succeeded to the extent of obtaining from William a specific declaration that he would exert his full influence to advance the interests of the line of Hanover, an explicit promise to this effect appearing in a letter written by Leibnitz to Eleonora early in the year 1699: "Le Roy a dit positivement à Madame Electrice qu'il establirait le droit à la succession pour sa postérité."*

With feminine ingenuity the Duchess of Celle appears to have made a further suggestion that a marriage should be arranged between her own little grand-daughter, named after her desolate mother, Sophia Dorothea, and the ten-year-old Duke of Gloucester, the only surviving child of the Princess Anne, thus, by means of a union between the two branches, straightening and simplifying the somewhat tortuous road which led to the British throne.

For twelve months the bitter controversy between William and the House of Commons obviated any practical measures being taken towards such an end, and, although eventually the King kept his word, the determined efforts of the British Parliament to reduce the army and diminish the heavy burden of debt, the doubt it expressed as to the benefit the nation received from the late peace, so deeply offended the dogmatic Monarch, whose hatred for Louis and the French people blinded him to all other considerations, as to distract his thoughts from any such matrimonial purposes.

* Leibnitz, vol. ii., pp. 107, 108.

It has been recorded that, irritated to exasperation by the design to get rid of his beloved Dutch guards and to reduce the army, his great solace, to insignificance, William penned a speech in which he declared that he came to this country at the desire of the nation to save the Kingdom from ruin, but that if it so disregarded his advice as to divest itself of its only means of defence, he must request them to name such persons as they thought fit to administer the Government, but that he himself would retire abroad until the time when they desired him to return. "By what means," adds the Chronicler, "the King was diverted from executing this resolution does not appear."*

On July 30, 1700, the Duke of Gloucester, sole surviving child of Anne, died of smallpox. Always anæmic and ailing, if Burnet's account is true of the trials the poor little creature underwent in the course of his education, his "decampment," as Sophia satirically calls his death, must have been a welcome release.

Burnet's system of tuition for a boy of ten years old needs his own words to describe adequately: "I read over the Psalms, Proverbs and Gospels with him and explained things which fell in my way, very copiously, . . . he came to understand things relating to religion beyond imagination. I went through geography with him that he knew all the maps very particularly. I explained to him the forms of government in every country, with the interest and trade of that country and what was both good and bad in it. I acquainted him with all the great revolutions that had been in the world and gave him a copious account of the Greek and Roman histories and of Plutarch's lives; the last thing I explained to him was the Gothic constitution and the beneficiary and feudal laws; I talked of these things at different times nearly three hours a day, this was both easy and delightful to him."† As the larger part of that which Burnet wrote is inaccurate, if not deliberately false, it is to be hoped that this account was written not as a fact, but to glorify the varied educational attainments of the writer; if, however, the relation is true, the smallpox can only mercifully have anticipated, by a short while, the destructive tendencies of the Whig Bishop of Salisbury,

* Tindal, vol. ii., p. 468; "Hardwicke Papers," p. 362.
† Burnet, vol. iv., p. 451.

for surely no child of ten years old could have survived long the ministrations of such an instructor.

Burnet's proclivities were well known to his contemporaries.

He was a constant correspondent with the Electress Sophia, who, with her usual satire, once remarked that the Bishop's letters contained many rare things beginning with Adam and Eve as far as the thousand devils transferred to the Gadarene swine, on which subject he made many "fort belles reflections."

Those "illustrious mendicants," the German Princes, at this period, as at many other times, devoted their energies almost entirely to their own aggrandisement. Frederick of Brandenburg proved no exception to the rule. He required a royal crown, so, taking advantage of the many foreign complications in which the Emperor was involved, he pressed his claim unremittingly.

To further his purpose, in the year 1700 he sent his wife, Sophia Charlotte, and her mother, the Electress Sophia, to consult the British King regarding the desired dignity.

While staying at Aix-la-Chapelle on their road to the Hague, Sophia received a communication from Stepney pointing out to her that, by the Declaration of Right, she and her descendants, being Protestants, alone were qualified to succeed to the throne of England. The writer explained the strong predilection of the House of Lords to the legitimate line and that other persons were of the opinion that the penalty exacted from the father, James II., ought not, necessarily, to exclude the son; the letter finishing with a declaration that, though indeed Stepney felt that it would be the greatest rashness for him to meddle in matters of such extreme delicacy, yet, if her Highness would condescend to explain to him her wishes, he would immediately place them before his royal master.*

Evidently such a communication as this could not have been written and sent without the direct knowledge and concurrence of King William. Probably the correspondence was designed to obtain, through an intermediary, some inkling of the views and designs of the House of Hanover, for undoubtedly at this moment the exigencies of foreign politics, coupled with the death of the Duke of Gloucester,

* Leibnitz, vol. ii., p. 208.

made imperative some definite settlement of the succession, William's mind becoming much disturbed on the subject. This explanation of the circumstances is the only reasonable solution, as the King knew that the Electress intended visiting him in a few weeks and, either at Dieren or Loo, he, personally, could have discussed the question with her and ascertained her desires from her own lips.

Sophia returned a truly feminine reply to the communication of Stepney, veiling as much as possible her real intentions: "If I were thirty years younger I have sufficiently good opinion of my blood and my religion to believe that they might think of me in England. But as there is little chance that I shall survive the two persons, much younger though more sickly than myself, it is to be feared that, after my death, they will regard my sons as foreigners; and the eldest is much more accustomed to play the despot (*trencher en souveraine*) than the poor Prince of Wales, who is too young to profit by the example of the King of France, and who will apparently be able quite easily to recover that which his father so rashly lost."*

That Sophia always retained friendly and even affectionate regard for the exiled family of Stuart is apparent from her correspondence, yet from previous utterances it is difficult to believe that she suddenly determined to relinquish her claims in favour of James's son, or that she really became indifferent to the splendid heritage offered her. That her thoughts constantly dwelt upon the subject of her succession to the English throne is incontrovertible, and in January, 1701, she attended at Celle a council on the subject, where in addition to herself, George William, Leibnitz and the Englishman, Cresset, were also present.†

With regard to her reply to Stepney's communication, perhaps the last sentence in the letter, "It seems to me that in England there are so many factions that one can be sure of nothing," may throw light on her attitude; that the Electress really doubted, from the troubles which William experienced with his Parliament, whether the English nation would be willing to accept either herself or any of her children as their monarch.

From Aix, Sophia and her daughter crossed Holland

* "Hardwicke Papers," vol. ii., p. 442.

† Klopp, "Fall of the House of Stuart," vol. viii., p. 147.

and finally reached the Hague, being accompanied by the Electoral Prince of Brandenburg, Frederick William, Sophia Charlotte's son. Here they met King William and with him discussed the questions in dispute; then on October 18 prepared to take their leave. The young Electoral Prince attended the King to the ship prepared for the royal embarkation and made so favourable an impression that, according to some reports, William proposed taking the boy to England, in the hopes that, by residing in this country, he might become habituated to the life and customs of the English and that Parliament and people eventually would be willing to accept the Prussian Prince in the place of the deceased Duke of Gloucester.

Such an idea might well have entered William's head; his object lay not in the advancement of the House of Hanover or any other family, but in placing on the throne of England a German prince bound by every tie of race and predilection to enmity to France and allegiance to the Great Alliance. In reality, the King's prerogative in no way qualified him to alter the line of succession already determined definitely by Parliament; Lord Onslow, at one time Speaker of the House of Commons, observes on this point: "I do positively affirm that it was not in his power to nominate anybody but the Princess Sophia, and if it had not been we all knew that his inclination as well as his vanity led him to the House of Brandenburg, who were his immediate heirs."*

Some of the Tories appear to have entertained a similar project, though applied to a different person, and put forward the proposition that the Electoral Prince, not of Brandenburg but of Hanover, George Augustus, son of George Louis, should be invited to finish his education in England in the hopes that such a course might imbue him with English ideas. Which of these propositions William may have favoured is not known, but his thoughts, as varied incidents show, were occupied continually with the subject of the succession.

When the Electress, in October of the same year, visited Loo, William, it has been stated, made her a direct proposition that, after his death, she should ascend the throne to the exclusion of the Princess Anne; it being reported that

* Burnet, vol. iv., p. 497, note.

a written statement to this effect would be found among his papers. Burnet declares that, early in Anne's reign, the House of Lords directed a search to be made and deputed the Dukes of Devonshire, Somerset, Marlborough, and Lords Jersey and Albemarle to carry out its behest, which they did and found nothing;* a result which even a superficial knowledge of the custom of Teutonic or Batavian Courts would have readily anticipated.

While the English Legislature continued in some degree of uncertainty, once more the action of Louis XIV. influenced the trend of British policy. By the will of Charles II. of Spain, who died November 1, 1700, the vacant throne devolved upon Philippe, duc d'Anjou, the second son of the Dauphin and therefore grandson of the French monarch. Louis gladly welcomed the prospective advancement of his immediate descendant and took all steps necessary to support it; but the possibility of a united France and Spain, with the consequent augmentation of the power of the French King which this consolidation of two hitherto hostile countries would produce, aroused afresh the deepest animosity in William.

To counteract the threatened evil, he endeavoured at once to reconstruct the Grand Alliance, and, as one means of effecting this object, he caused to be introduced into the British Parliament a Bill regulating the succession to the throne.

Doubtless by Royal command, on March 12, Mr. Conyers, the Member for Durham, introduced a series of resolutions defining some of the most important restrictions and limitations on the regal prerogative, explicitly declaring that the monarch shall join in the communion of the Church of England as by law established, and concluding by naming, as next in succession to the throne of Great Britain, the Princess Sophia and the heirs of her body, being Protestant. The Act having passed in June, 1701, to complete the necessary ceremonial Charles Gerard, Earl of Macclesfield, received instructions to go on a special mission to Hanover, conveying to the Electress a formal intimation of the place she now held in the line of succession, and, further, to invest the Elector, George Louis, with the Order of the Garter.

* Burnet, vol. iv., p. 554, note; vol. v., p. 15.

Accompanied by a numerous train, among whom the obtrusive Toland contrived to be included, Lord Macclesfield, the descendant of an old Cavalier family, possessing also personally some of the attributes of his race, crossed over to Holland, where numerous young English gentlemen, who for various purposes frequented that country in preference to their own, joined his party, finding its habits congenial, also sustaining hopes that the hospitality extended to the Ambassador would not be denied his following. The reception accorded the English envoy "was extraordinary magnificent." "He was received by Deputys of the best Quality on the Frontiers of the Country, and his expenses were defrayed on the Road with all his Retinue till he arrived at Hanover." The Ambassador and his immediate train lodged in one of the largest houses in the city, accommodation at the Elector's charge being supplied to all those who accompanied him; even travellers who might be passing that way "received hospitality" provided that they were Englishmen.

Toland, whose confidences were equally embarrassing to those he praised or blamed, in his usual naïve style informs us that "all the Servants had half a crown a day given 'em, in good silver pieces to provide for themselves, for they would not disgrace 'em, it seems, with their Master's broken Meat nor be at the trouble to dress for them in particular. The Elector's own servants waited on the Guests every morning with Silver Coffee and Teapots to their Chambers; Burgundy, Champagne, Rhenish and all manner of Wines were as common as Beer." In addition to a very lavish entertainment the Electress Sophia presented the envoy with her portrait set in diamonds and the Electoral arms of the same "over it to the value of several thousand Pounds"; the Elector's gift consisting of a "huge Bason and Ewer of Massy Gold to a very considerable value." Toland found himself included among the recipients of costly presents, which his modesty does not permit him to specify except that they were "partly in Gold Medals, but what I much esteem and will always preserve is the Queen of Prussia, the Electress, the Elector and the young Princes' Pictures done in oil colours and very like."

No wonder that, some years after, Sophia intimated that she did not desire the honour of any more special

missions, as she found them unprofitable in every sense, the reception of Lord Macclesfield's embassy costing the Electoral exchequer no less a sum than £7,000,* an expenditure which must have sorely tried the saving soul of George Louis, whose "frugality" is meticulously extolled by Toland.

Relating by name the chief members of Lord Macclesfield's company, Lord Saye and Seal, Lord Tunbridge and Lord Mohun, this eighteenth-century precursor of the special correspondent of to-day gives the following inimitable description of the last-named infamous nobleman: "and because when my Lord Mohun was very young and not capable to distinguish his company, he had the misfortune to commit some excesses—(which, in parenthesis it may be added, were murder and rape)—I am glad to be able to tell you, Sir, of my own knowledge that none of the company were more generally acceptable, that none lived with greater Sobriety nor delivered himself on all occasions with better judgment or in politer Language." Indeed, the whole party seem to have behaved with extreme discretion, "and if any of them (and I know of none) did misbehave himself it could not well be otherwise among so many young people, and I defy the like number, unless they should be picked on purpose, to carry themselves more decently."†

Inclusion in this respectable assembly probably gained for Toland admission to the Electoral Chapel, as his narrative further informs us that Sophia caused the Ordered Common Prayer of the Church of England to be read before her in the ante-room; "she made the responses and performed the ceremonies as punctually as if she had been used to it all her life, for she ever had our Liturgy by her, though I believe this was the first time that it was publicly read in Hanover, for which reason many assisted there who understood not a tittle of it."‡

During the autumn of this same year, 1701, the old Duke of Celle, accompanied by his grand-nephew, George Augustus, again paid a visit of gratitude to the King of England at Loo, for the purpose of thanking him for his exertions on behalf of the House of Hanover. Inferentially, also, it may be gathered that other more material reasons existed, since William received his guests graciously and

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 245. † Toland, p. 63. ‡ *Ibid.*

promised to obtain for Sophia, the named successor in the Act, an annual pecuniary allowance from English funds; a pledge which he would scarcely have made on his own initiative, although he probably knew that such grant would be particularly agreeable to the old Electress as, since the death of her husband and her dependence on the generosity of an ungenerous son, her financial arrangements had been quite inadequate to her position. William also extended to George Augustus, at this time, an invitation to take up his abode in England, but of these proposals there is no written evidence of any kind; they were made by word of mouth, and no opportunity occurred for their performance, the King dying soon afterwards, in the month of March, 1702.*

Whatever may be the verdict of history on William III., his manifest greatness in some matters, his palpable shortcomings in others, to him this country owes the establishment on its throne of the House of Hanover. His exertions caused the Act of Succession to be passed, his negotiations brought the Electress and her family pre-eminently before the eyes of this nation; but he did so not to benefit England, on the contrary, solely for the gratification of his individual sentiments and for the furtherance of his own political ends. His vehement hatred of Louis XIV., his deep-seated hostility to all things French, caused him to believe implicitly, as Baron Steinghens actually declared in 1714,† that the safety of Germany itself demanded the establishment of the Protestant Succession in England.

To counteract the designs of the abhorred Bourbons, William would have placed a Guelph or a Hohenzollern, an Elector of Hanover or a King of Prussia on the throne of Great Britain; to him the welfare of the British people was absorbed in the paramount importance of the maintenance of the Grand Alliance; the power and might of England to be deemed but a valuable piece in the operations towards the checkmate of Louis XIV.

To understand his springs of action, to appreciate his actual performance, he should be judged, not as a King of Great Britain, but as the vital force of the league against France.

* Leibnitz, Introduction (Klopp), vol. ii., p. 61.
† Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 467.

CHAPTER IV

STUART AND GUELPH

On the death of William of Orange a new era commenced in the history of the Protestant Succession. No longer did the choice of the person or the dynasty to fill the throne when it should become vacant depend on the policy of a King filled with great ideals and willing to peril all to attain his ends; it served now as one of the levers by which a political party endeavoured to clear the road to its own aggrandisement and defeat the objects of its opponents.

Opinions may and do differ with regard to the aims and efforts of William, just as they differ concerning the conduct of Oliver Cromwell, yet none can doubt that both were great men; in the Dutch prince "a fiery soul" which "fretted the pigmy body to decay" emphasised the splendour of his actions, the long reach of the foresight, and the consuming energy which overcame so many difficulties; qualities which almost hallowed the means used to attain the end.

The same cannot be said of the statesmen of the reign of Anne.

To William the Grand Alliance and all that it contained existed as a holy creed; he fought as chivalrously amid the mud of Flanders or between the wet dykes of Holland as ever did a crusader on the burning sands of Syria, even though the object sought was as chimerical in the one case as in the other.

Yet neither the person nor the designs of the defunct monarch attracted the affection or the approbation of the people over whom he ruled. They little lamented their dead sovereign; his unpleasant manners, his Batavian phlegm, his strong predilection for his Dutch followers, and the lavish manner in which he distributed to them English honours and English wealth, in no way commended him to his British subjects, who showed their feelings by few tokens of mourning at his death.*

* "Portland Papers," vol. iv., pp. 35, 36.

How far this prevalent sentiment might have influenced the policy of the nation it is difficult to surmise, but, as oftentimes before and since, the actions of foreign potentates, the attitude of Continental countries, stirred up the British blood and caused the people to pursue a course to which previously they had shown great disinclination.

To William's efforts to convince his subjects that the interests of the United Provinces and of Great Britain were identical the people turned a deaf ear, in no uncertain manner expressing their objection to intervention in Continental concerns. But when Louis XIV., touched at the death of his unfortunate guest, James II., immediately recognised the son of the deceased monarch as his father's legitimate successor to the crown of England, the pride of the British public took offence at this interference with their domestic affairs, and the nation, forgetting its previous experience, putting on one side its declared determination not to meddle in European quarrels, became as hearty in its warlike spirit as ever the Dutch King himself had been; well might Defoe exclaim: "There is none I know so entirely governed by their humour as the English."

Notwithstanding a considerable influx into the new Parliament of members opposed to the conduct of the late King, the first resolution which passed the Commons at once demonstrated the determination of the House to continue hostilities and the growing estimation in which the nation regarded Marlborough.

That great English soldier, after spending two months at the Hague endeavouring to concert measures with the selfish and apathetic Dutch authorities, took command of the allied forces on July 2, 1702. Trammelled by the interference of the States General, the jealousy of the King of Prussia, and the meddling of other would-be strategists, he, in reality, effected but little during this campaign, the capture of some few comparatively unimportant towns, and finally the reduction of Liège, comprising all the successful achievements.

To the operations in Germany and Flanders, the House of Hanover, constant in its allegiance to the Grand Alliance, contributed its share of the necessary troops. Some two years previously, in 1700, George William of Celle and George Louis, now Elector of Hanover, on their own

volition, rendered an important service to the Empire by co-operating in the settlement of a dispute which might, if not treated suitably, have swelled into a serious crisis.

By their prompt action in intervening between the King of Denmark and the Duke of Holstein Gottorp, they compelled the former power to conclude the peace of Travendale, and thus averted the hostility of Charles XII. of Sweden, the stormy petrel of the North, and the many complications which thereupon would have ensued.

In another direction the two princes deserved the gratitude of the Powers supporting the Grand Alliance. For long past Louis XIV. had endeavoured assiduously to detach some of the smaller German princes from their allegiance to the Emperor, there being many reasons why he should not despair of success, for the distinguished rulers of the lesser Teutonic principalities never at any time proved quite inaccessible to the seductive influence of subsidies. Louis hoped by the same means to attract Anton Ulrich of Wolfenbüttel to his interests, and use this German State as a fulcrum for extending the same scheme into wider operation.

The manœuvre did not escape the keen eye of William III., himself an adept at political intrigue; by his instigation the Dukes of Celle and Hanover marched against their own kinsman, and having taken Peyna, the chief fortress of his dominions, compelled the Duke to reject all the proposals of the French King and range himself on the side of the Allies.*

Although George Louis, constantly occupied in warfare, to him the most congenial pursuit, turned his thoughts but little to the question of the future occupancy of the British throne, his mother, the old Electress, never lost her interest in the subject or ceased such effort as she deemed necessary to advance her claim.

The Resident of the Court of Hanover at St. James's received a sum of 300,000 dollars, provided by the Committee of the Calenberg estates, to disburse as he thought fit in support of the Electress' right of succession;† the allotment of such an amount by the frugal Sophia eloquently demonstrating the depth of her feeling in the matter.

* Havemann, vol. iii., pp. 371-4.

† Ward, "Electress Sophia and Hanoverian Succession," p. 362.

Directly after the death of King William, Queen Anne gave to Schutz, the Hanoverian envoy, an assurance that she would support the succession as appointed by statute; she also, as an earnest of her intentions, caused the name of the Electress to be included in the Liturgy, "in the Collect for the Royal Family as next heir to the throne," and, "as the right which recommended her was in her own blood, she was designed by her Christian name and not by her title."

To impress her sincerity upon the Electress, Anne sent an embassy to Herrenhausen. On this occasion her choice of a representative fell on Lord Dartmouth, a personal friend and favoured correspondent of Sophia, whose likes and dislikes were very pronounced and who rarely refrained from expressing pungently her opinion on all subjects, human or otherwise, which in any way crossed her path.

But that nobleman showed a marked disinclination for the post; he possessed no desire "to burn his fingers," and contrived to evade the honourable but profitless distinction.*

On this refusal, the Queen selected Lord Winchelsea, whom, on arriving at his destination, the Electress received graciously enough and declared to be "a good little man"; her written description of the diplomatist, however, being of a more qualified character, for she pithily depicts him as "a good creature; he is not a great politician nor a good dancer. He has need of a master to rule both his feet and his head."†

Notwithstanding her remark to Leibnitz, that the English were much mistaken if they thought that she occupied herself at all seriously with British affairs, or that she had any intention of making advances in either England or Scotland,‡ Sophia took deliberate steps to assert that which she conceived to be her right and to which, notwithstanding her disclaimer, she tenaciously adhered.

Schutz, her representative, received three documents empowering him to perform such executive acts as might be necessary on her behalf should Queen Anne die;§ and, in all matters, the attitude of the old Princess distinctly proved how greatly the prospect of accession to the sovereignty of a great State attracted and gratified her vivacious and resolute nature.

* Burnet, vol. v., p. 13, note.
† Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 6.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii., pp. 345, 369.
§ *Ibid.*, Introduction (Klopp), p. 23.

As the exigencies of the political situation in England demanded, the subserviency of both political parties to the House of Hanover advanced or receded.

The Queen's displeasure at the contentions of the two Houses of Parliament and the immense impetus given to the Whig prestige by the superb victory of Marlborough at Blenheim reduced still further the influence of the Tories and compelled them, involved in many difficulties by the opposition to the Occasional Conformity Bill, to seek for some counter-note which might perchance improve their political prospects.

But for a time their fortunes seemed doomed to wane.

The Triennial Act rendered a dissolution of Parliament imperative. In March, 1705, a General Election ensued; the new House of Commons met on October 25 with a Whig majority, a fact which made a strong impression on the Lord Treasurer, Godolphin, who did not intend to peril his influence by allowing any suspicion to arise of his antagonism to the predominant faction. He therefore at once infused a Whig element much stronger than before into the Ministry, notably by the appointment to the post of Lord Privy Seal—in lieu of the then occupant, the Duke of Buckingham, a convinced Tory—of the Duke of Newcastle, whose extensive hospitality—never a negligible factor in political life—exercised a distinctly beneficent attraction over the rank and file of the Whig Party. The appointment also of Lord Cowper as Chancellor, the inclusion of Addison, the most prominent, as well as the most talented, Whig scribe, and the dismissal of several prominent High Church Privy Councillors demonstrated that the Court now favoured the Whigs.

The Tories did not remain quiescent under their defeat, an unexpected incident providing them with an opportunity for displaying activity. On November 5 the Electress Sophia wrote a letter, in answer to a communication from Tenison, Archbishop of Canterbury, in which, while expressing "no desire to change her way of living," she yet declared her willingness to comply with whatever might be the desire of her friends, "in case Parliament thinks fit for the good of the Kingdom to invite me to England."*

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 178.

Acting on this hint, hoping to embarrass the Whigs by forcing them to vote either against the wishes of Queen Anne or their own convictions, the Tories brought forward a motion in the House of Lords that the Electress, as the immediate successor to the throne, be invited to reside in this country.

The task of moving the resolution required some effrontery, the Queen herself being present at the debate. The opportunity found the man. Lord Haversham, newly ennobled, red-faced, stout, but "very eloquent," took the burden upon himself; with great plausibility he devoted his arguments to show the danger which would ensue to the commonwealth if the next occupant of the throne resided at Hanover, such a long distance from the scene of government.

"Why!" he exclaimed, "the pretended successor might be in England in three days, whereas it might be three weeks before the declared successor could come over."*

Then, in his peroration he dealt a trenchant blow at William III.: "Would it not be to the advantage of all England that when the successor comes over he should not bring a flood of foreigners along with him to eat up the good of the land?"

Though supported by a respectable following, the motion met with vehement opposition from the majority of the Lords, who knew full well how extremely disagreeable such a procedure would be to the Queen. In truth, Anne deeply resented the idea, giving vent to her feelings concerning the highly objectionable proposal in a missive to the Duke of Marlborough wherein she complains that the proceedings "give me a great deal of uneasiness, for I am of a temper to fear the worst"; she then concludes with an appeal to the Duke that she should depend upon his kind friendship to "put their notions right" or "else I must expect to meet with a great many mortifications."†

Knowing with what an uncertain hold they retained the Queen's favour, the Whigs seized the opportunity of ingratiating themselves with her by defeating the resolution; then, on the other hand, fearing they might offend the Electress they, in their turn, introduced the Regency Bill

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vi., p. 461.

† "Blenheim Papers," Historical MSS., p. 16.

and also a measure for the naturalisation of Sophia and her children.

These efforts, in one respect, failed, for the Electress never forgave the slight which she considered their actions put upon her.

Yet, as Lord Dartmouth justly says, the Regency Bill formed the real security for the Hanoverian succession by constituting, in case of a demise of the Crown, a powerful and representative body, never before existent, to administer the Act: the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Keeper, the Lord Treasurer, the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, the Lord High Admiral, and the Lord Chief Justice for the time being.

Sophia was a woman; notwithstanding the extreme care with which she drafted her reply to the Archbishop's epistle and, as Leibnitz declared, endeavoured to explain to the English people that, while she, herself, was in no way indifferent, she did not wish to put herself forward or cabal against the Queen, yet she showed by many indications that at heart she resented the manner in which Parliament, led by the Whig Ministry, told her that her presence in the kingdom would be unwelcome.

Matters, moreover, were not mended when she learnt that it had been deemed advisable to despatch another mission to the Court of Hanover under Charles Montagu, Lord Halifax, for the purpose of presenting her with the Acts of Regency and Naturalisation and of investing her grandson, the Electoral Prince, George Augustus, with the Order of the Garter and the Dukedom of Cambridge. On receipt of the news she acidly remarked: "The Court of England need not make me pay for any more envoys even when she heaps on us many more titles, and I find Mr. Howe (the ordinary resident) quite good enough for an honour of no value."*

In the train of Lord Halifax appeared Sir John Vanbrugh, Clarenceux King at Arms, better known as the architect of Blenheim Palace, and an unobtrusive secretary, by name Joseph Addison, who seems to have won the only genuine success in the whole affair by completely charming the old Princess, who writes that she finds him "fort bon et, ce qui est plus extraordinaire, fort modeste poète."

* "Blenheim Papers," Historical MSS., p. 16; Leibnitz, vol. iii., pp. 245, 246.

The mission, whether welcomed or not, nevertheless arrived at a singularly opportune moment and assisted in dispersing a cloud on the political horizon which, but for the adroit conduct of Marlborough, might have been productive of very serious consequences.

A talented and in some respects gifted woman, Sophia, following the instincts of her sex, depended for inspiration and guidance on a superior intellect. This she found in Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, a renowned philosopher who, possessing the universal knowledge of a German scholar, provided information on every subject, celestial and terrestrial, and uttered authoritative announcements with equal facility on the management of the army on the Rhine or the peculiarities of Lapland singing, the latter art, apparently, being included in the same category as the history of snakes in Iceland.

Leibnitz took an absorbing interest in the question of the Hanoverian succession to the English throne and exercised his varied attainments to advance and support the claims of Sophia. Being regarded as the most potent literary force in the Empire and continually employed in issuing manifestos, he considered the present juncture a singularly suitable opportunity for producing a fresh pronouncement concerning the position of the Electress.

This appeared in the form of a pamphlet, purporting to be written by Sir Rowland Gwynne, a busy Whig, and addressed to the Earl of Stamford, but which, from evidence since found, is believed to have been only transcribed by Gwynne from the original production of Leibnitz.*

Queen Anne, irritated before, became exasperated beyond measure at this new analysis of the effect her death might produce on the kingdom she ruled, a theme which even the erudition of a Teuton philosopher, transmitted through the medium of an English politician, failed to render palatable. Gladly concurring in a resolution of the House of Commons, which declared the pamphlet a scandalous, false and malicious libel, tending to create misunderstanding between the Courts of Hanover and St. James, Anne also personally wrote an indignant letter to the Electress demanding an explanation of her conduct. This epistle she confided to Marlborough, just departing for Hanover, to deliver direct

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., Introduction (Klopp), p. 31.

to Sophia. A more ill-timed communication could not have been sent.

George Louis, now not only Elector of Hanover, but, by the death of George William in 1705, also possessor of the long-coveted appanage of Celle, a short time previously absolutely refused to allow his Hanoverian contingent to join the allied forces and assist in carrying out the proposed campaign, "obstinately persisting in letting none of his troops march notwithstanding that he approves very much of the project," is the weary comment of Marlborough.* No persuasion could move George from this attitude, Godolphin himself confessing that the Elector "has so little regard to what would please this country and, in particular, be so useful to the common cause."†

Under such strained circumstances, foreseeing the disastrous and far-reaching consequences which might result from a personal quarrel supervening, Marlborough withheld the Queen's letter and laboured hard to effect some satisfactory arrangement.

A favourite with the old Princess—flattering her feminine foibles by always kneeling before her when granted an audience—he exerted his fascination to such good purpose as to ameliorate appreciably the situation, Sophia officially disclaiming all knowledge of the offending publication,‡ thus to a certain degree assuaging Queen Anne's wounded pride. The Electress, moreover, took the opportunity of writing to the Duchess of Marlborough a most complimentary though somewhat stilted epistle in which the Duke is described as "having manners as obliging and polished as his actions are glorious and admirable." For a while after Marlborough's successful efforts relations between the two Courts continued, outwardly at least, friendly, communications concerning the succession being made to that section of the Tories who went by the name of "the Highflyers" by a certain Mr. Scott, a dependant on the Electoral bounty; later, moreover, Lord Peterborough, on his own account, began negotiations both with the Electress and the Elector, receiving, however, a chilling reception from the latter.§ Indeed, while Sophia took a deep interest, showed some diplomatic skill, and evinced

* Marlborough (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 13.
† *Ibid.*, p. 14.
‡ Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 31.
§ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

a distinct desire to profit by the Act of Succession, George Louis treated the whole matter with perfect indifference, accepting all marks of distinction sent him with a degree of frigidity which bore the appearance of aversion, and did not hesitate to express his contempt for that which he described as " baubles and trifles."

Lord Macaulay relates in a characteristic paragraph how the elder Pitt, when a boy at Eton, wrote some verses on the death of George I. eulogistic of his love of literature, whereupon the Whig essayist succinctly remarks that George loved nothing but punch and fat women. This description scarcely comprises all the objects of the royal and electoral affection. He spent as much time as he could contrive in hunting, and undoubtedly took great delight in warfare, feeling a genuine ambition to be numbered among the successful generals of the day, a desire doomed to complete and unmitigated disappointment.

The Hanoverian troops, it is true, took part in the battle of Blenheim, Duke Maximilian of Hanover, the Elector's younger brother, commanding the cavalry on the right wing of Marlborough's army, but the strained relations then existent between the Courts of England and Hanover, combined with some jealousy between the Generals themselves, caused the Brunswick-Lüneburg levies to be absent from the great victory of Ramillies, with the result that consequently no glory attached to either the soldiers themselves or their commander. On the contrary, the event redounded but little to the credit of the Hanoverian ruler, while greatly increasing the reputation of Marlborough.

Though unable to carry out the plan of campaign as originally intended, owing to the selfish policy of the Dutch States and the injured dignity of the Elector, the great General, notwithstanding this default of his allies, placed himself at the head of such forces in Brabant as his indomitable energy could collect, and, by a remarkable display of military genius, gained his second most brilliant victory.

That an action of such importance as that of Ramillies should have been won without the assistance of the Hanoverian contingent deeply wounded the pride of the Elector; fearing complete loss of influence in the council of the Allies, George Louis, on the next visit of Marlborough

to Hanover, yielded to the solicitations of the polite Englishman, increased the number of the promised forces and, in addition, sent his son, the Electoral Prince, George Augustus, to be attached to the staff of the Commander-in-Chief.

In January, 1707, Prince Louis of Baden, a lethargic and pedantic general of the old school, died; whereupon the command of the forces on the Rhine devolved upon the Margrave of Bayreuth, a Prince of the House of Brandenburg, quite as aged and inactive as his predecessor, though far inferior to him in military skill and influence; consequently no match for the able Villars, who easily surprised and overthrew him. Thus, while Marlborough and Eugene by their triumphs kept the French army in check, the Imperial levies, weak in numbers, bad in discipline and worse in leadership, suffered a complete surprise at the hand of the French *maréchal*, who drove them back in disorder and captured all their stores.

Wearied at the incapacity and annoyed at the dilatoriness of his German colleagues, Marlborough turned his eyes, as indeed he had done for some time past, towards George Louis as the most suitable person in point of age to hold the Imperial command. To the Austrian Court, in their choice of a general, the possession of military ability or matured knowledge was deemed a mere matter of detail; the essential qualities in an Imperial commander being sixteen quarterings, princely birth and seniority in rank. Marlborough, therefore, experienced considerable difficulty in persuading the Court of Vienna to fall in with his views concerning the appointment of his nominee, and only succeeded by promising that the Netherlands army, under his own command, should operate against the flank of the successful Villars. But when, at length, a tardy consent had been obtained, he found a difficulty even more insurmountable in the extreme reluctance of the Hanoverian Elector himself to accept the part destined for him. The bad condition of the Imperial army formed a valid and logical excuse, yet it is doing no injustice to George Louis to believe that, in the request and its surrounding circumstances, he saw a very favourable opportunity, by a judicious display of repugnance, of pressing forward his claims to the recognition of his Electorate; he up to that time, though wearing

the Electoral hat, yet being debarred, by the votes of a majority of the members, from taking his seat in the Electoral College.

Marlborough continued insistent upon the acceptance of the command by George Louis, "not only from the wish to throw lustre on the house next in succession to the British throne, but with the hopes that a prince in the prime of life would retrieve the military honour of the Germans." If these words of his biographer fitly represent Marlborough's frame of mind, he was doomed to complete disillusionment, for George Louis, though personally courageous, displayed but little military talent and much jealous conceit.

It is evident that in urging this appointment the English general was actuated, almost entirely, by political motives; the Emperor distinctly objected to change the command of his army, and Marlborough, unless he had been influenced by ulterior reasons, would certainly have acquiesced in the sensible suggestion of Eugene that General von Heister, an officer of great skill and experience, should control the Imperial forces under colour of the name of the old Margrave.* However, after much pressure and an attempt on his own part to obtain a further subsidy from England, George Louis, his conditions with regard to the recognition of his Electorate having been accepted, joined the Army of the Rhine at Etlingen and, on September 13, 1707, assumed the command.

The restoration of discipline and the replenishment of all munitions called for his first efforts, while a small engagement undertaken by Count Merci, one of his divisional generals, an officer possessing enterprise and talent, met with success and assisted in restoring the courage of the troops. Demands for men and money issued by the Diet to the Circles of the Empire received some attention, so by November 8, when George Louis thought fit to return to the pleasures of Herrenhausen, the German troops had assumed such a degree of efficiency as to call for notice in the Queen's speech and a paragraph in the reply of the House of Commons, declaring that "the Elector of Hanover being at the head of the army of the Rhine gives us the greatest hopes of success on that side from his conduct and authority."†

* Marlborough (Coxe), vol. ii., pp. 229, 230.

† "Parliamentary History," vol. xvi., p. 596; Commons Journals.

Notwithstanding these compliments, which probably never reached his ears, George Louis displayed great disinclination to continue the task he had commenced. In October of the same year Marlborough writes: "The Elector tells me very positively that if the Emperor does not put his army in a better condition than it is at this time, he will not return to it the next campaign." Jealousy of Eugene furnished the motive of this resolution on the part of the Hanoverian prince; his vanity could not support the knowledge that two generals, both natives of foreign countries, should at the head of large armies obtain magnificent victories and become the recipients of high honours and universal praise while he himself remained unknown in command of a subsidiary force and allotted only a subordinate place in the strategical plan. So many difficulties did he make, so great aloofness did he display, that Marlborough paid a second visit, personally, to Hanover, accompanied this time by Eugene, in April, 1708, to overcome the objections which the Elector might raise and persuade him, if possible, to a fuller measure of co-operation.

"I am afraid," writes Godolphin to Marlborough, "the pains you take will have no other effect than to increase the Elector of Hanover's jealousy of Prince Eugene and render him still fuller of difficulties and irresolution."* To a limited degree the visit proved efficacious, George Louis consenting to remain in command of the troops on the Rhine, but only on condition that the army under the control of Eugene should be depleted and form a third and separate body, while Marlborough remained at the head of the forces in the Netherlands.

Whilst apparently acquiescing in the plan, so as to obtain the co-operation of this irascible prince and yet not imperil the success of the campaign, the two great captains came to a secret understanding by which they agreed to act in conjunction should such tactical or strategical operation be necessary. Marlborough in his despatch, after detailing the reasons for weakening the troops allotted to Eugene, continues: "As to joining the two armies we thought it best not to acquaint the Elector with it, so I expect when that is put in execution he will be very angry, but since the good of the campaign depends on it, I have no remedy but patience."†

* Marlborough (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 413. † *Ibid.*, p. 415.

Again the success of the operations rested entirely with the English Commander-in-Chief and his able colleagues, for while George Louis, opposed to the Elector of Bavaria, continued the manœuvre pithily described by Burnet, "On the Upper Rhine the two Electors continued looking on one another without venturing on any action," in the Netherlands, by a brilliant and suddenly conceived movement of the allied forces, the French found themselves heavily defeated at Oudenarde.

In this battle the Electoral Prince, George Augustus, displayed great daring, leading a charge at the head of a squadron of dragoons, and in the ranks of the French guards the Chevalier de St. George equally distinguished himself for personal courage and address.

A highly interesting account of this battle, written in verse, has emanated from the pen of a northern poet, John Scott, who recounts the valorous deeds of the "elected King of England," as he designates George, and the "Prince of Wales, called King of the English," as he describes James, in such terms as to leave the impression on an unbiassed reader that if by chance any more aspirants for regal honours had been wandering over Europe, the poet's muse possessed sufficient generosity to have included them all in the same battle and endowed them with the same heroic qualities.*

Once more, in 1709, the grievances, neglect and divergent views of the Powers forming the Grand Alliance threatened the efficiency of the campaign designed by Marlborough. By the display of diplomatic talents, almost as brilliant as his military gifts, he overcame all difficulties and at length assembled an army of more than 100,000 men in the neighbourhood of Courtrai. On this occasion he found himself opposed by a general more his equal than on any previous occasion, for Maréchal Villars, a skilled soldier, not merely a successful courtier, with marked adroitness evaded all efforts of the Allies to bring him to a decisive action and, by entrenching himself on a line covering Arras, barred the road to Calais, thus preventing the invasion of Picardy.

Forced to attack these lines, Marlborough fought the battle of Malplaquet, the last of his great engagements and

* "The Remembrance," Scottish History Society, No. 38.

the least successful; in truth a Pyrrhic victory, the loss of the Allies being double the number of the casualties of the conquered.

This combat practically terminated the war, for in the other theatres of operations neither Daun in Savoy nor George Louis on the Rhine met with even the semblance of success.

The latter commander, in attempting an offensive, sustained a severe repulse, as the Duc de Berwick describes, being beaten "à plate couture," 2,000 men killed and as many prisoners. Once more finding that, while Europe resounded with the deeds of Marlborough and Eugene, no mention was made or meed of glory given to himself, the Elector of Hanover retired in dudgeon back to his dominions, leaving his army, for all military purposes, idle and useless. He did not return to his command, for in 1710 Eugene took charge of the troops upon the Rhine and the military career of George terminated.

No writer, however disposed to be eulogistic to a monarch or desirous of exalting the fame of a dynasty, can, with due regard to historical truth, represent George Louis, in military matters, as other than limited in capacity and futile in performance. Personal courage he undoubtedly possessed and also a strong partiality for warlike operations, coupled with an ardent desire for fame and glory; but his military capabilities lay more in the management of the details of drill and organisation than in the direction of active warfare in the field, and he also showed those traits, so characteristic of a small and narrow nature—undue belief in his own talents and bitter jealousy of the fame and glory of others.

Königsmark, it is true, can hardly be considered an unprejudiced witness, but in one of his letters to Sophia Dorothea he speaks very disparagingly of the military qualifications of George Louis;* and Prince Eugene, incontrovertibly, held the same opinion.†

In 1709 the Elector had a great opportunity.

While Marlborough and Eugene were fighting the campaign of Malplaquet they planned a subsidiary movement by which a force should be despatched into Alsace

* Wilkins, "Loves of an Uncrowned Queen," vol. i., p. 294.

† "Stuart Papers," vol. iii., p. 237.

to rouse and support the malcontent population; this, if executed rapidly, might have caused serious disaster to the French and materially assisted the attack in the Netherlands. Much delay ensued; "the Elector of Hanover made, as usual, numerous difficulties before he assumed command"; but at length, by violating the neutrality of Switzerland, he sent, through the Canton of Basle, into Alsace a picked body of troops under Count Merci, his favourite divisional commander. Merci, advancing with more courage than prudence, met the Comte de Bourg with a detachment from Maréchal d'Harcourt's army and sustained a sharp defeat, being driven back across the Rhine with heavy loss.*

In this important movement George Louis completely failed and, on the ground that he received adequate support neither in men nor supplies, resigned his commission and retired in sullen anger to his own territories. The complaint to a certain extent was justified, but the same difficulty confronted every commander of every army contributed by the Grand Alliance.

It would be placing a mountain in juxtaposition to a molehill to compare Marlborough to George Louis, yet in this particular connection the comparison is justified, for while the great Englishman invariably had to contend with the enormous difficulties incidental to leading an army composed of many nationalities, controlled by various, and often conflicting, governments, yet in each case his splendid genius, his admirable tact, and his extraordinary fertility of resource in preparing details, foreseeing emergencies and adapting means to an end, obtained for him magnificent results.

On the other hand, George Louis when confronted with the ordinary obstacles always attendant on the assembly of military forces drawn from many different peoples, feeling his dignity hurt by the result of his "chagrinante campagne,"† cast to the winds all thoughts of the danger to the common cause, threw up his office and retired, full of jealous anger, to seek such consolation as he could obtain from his ill-favoured concubines and such solace as the luxury of his private life might afford.

* Berwick, "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 158.

† "Sophia Charlotte's Correspondence," p. 287.

CHAPTER V

GUELPH IN ABEYANCE

These military operations, with their attendant results upon the aspect of Continental affairs, brought about a corresponding change in the political atmosphere of the British Isles.

A new distinction of thought now existed between the parties. Though still divided by the diversity of opinions aroused by the revolution, the question of the continuance of the war excited great controversy, and the rivalry between Guelph and Stuart remained for a time in abeyance.

Brilliant as were the victories of the great British general, all sections of the people suffered from the burdens inevitable to a prolonged conflict; the working classes, moreover, having a special grievance of their own in the transportation of some thousands of refugees from the Palatinate, harried and plundered by the troops of Louis, whom the policy of the Whigs, by giving all facilities for naturalisation, encouraged to emigrate to England.

The poorer people in the country, themselves distressed with lack of employment and dearness of food, grudged the sums contributed in relief of the foreigner by the Government or subscribed from private sources;* the clergy disliked the influx into their parishes of alien paupers professing nonconformity and introducing strange habits, even fresh diseases, and the feeling gradually spread that the Whig magnates favoured the war because it conduced to their own interests, and that to Marlborough, individually, the continuance of hostilities meant further supply of honours and a fresh augmentation of that wealth of which already he enjoyed too large a share.

But if the glamour of his splendid achievements failed to blind the people to the many defects of the great General, how much more patent became the manifold imperfections both in reputation and administration of his Whig colleagues

* Blenheim MSS., 8th Report, p. 47.

who possessed no such attributes as could veil their deficiencies from the national eye.

To the student of the events of the period the character of the men who ruled the country through a series of crises, which conceivably would have wrecked the fortune of any other nation, is a perpetual source of wonder and astonishment. No person of any distinction in public life escaped the virus of corruption, some being affected by the direct means of proffered wealth or honours, others by the more insidious temptation of the sale of their principles for the price of power and influence; none escaped this taint, not even those who, owing to the ignorance or the connivance of the Whig historians, have posed, for a time, as clean-handed politicians.

When Sir James Dalrymple in writing his history came upon evidence which disclosed the fact that Algernon Sidney, famed as an austere Republican, lived in the receipt of a substantial pension from Louis XIV. of France, he declares that he felt as if his son had turned his back on the foe in the day of battle. Such acute disappointment may not affect those who find that even Lord Somers, "the ablest and most virtuous statesman of the age," succumbed to the prevalent disease. But the fact remains that the ill-natured inuendo of Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough, "he got as much money as he could in that post and some grants not becoming a chancellor to have,"* instead of being only the scandalous gossip of a virulent virago, proves true in substance and reality, the immaculate Whig statesman consenting to the dismissal of his chief, Godolphin, and to the practical break-up of the Government which that Minister led, for a bribe of £3,000 paid in instalments. This is shown by the subjoined receipt in the Civil Service Acquittances, April 2, 1709: "I acknowledge to have received this day, by Her Majesty's order and appointment out of Her Majesty's secret service money, the sum of One Thousand pounds"; the same formula, for similar sums of money, signed by the same statesman, being found repeated three times at subsequent dates.†

As with this leader, so with the rank and file.

The bulk of the Whig Party possessed few claims either

* "Duchess of Marlborough Correspondence," vol. ii., p. 140.

† R.O. Secret Service Acquittance, T. 38, 737.

to the respect or confidence of the people, whose discontent increased from day to day, driving the Ministry to unwise and indiscreet actions which finally entirely alienated from it the confidence of both Queen and Country.

For a while the splendour of Marlborough's triumphs maintained in office the Government he cherished and supported; moreover, through his wife, the Duchess, a violent advocate of Whig doctrines,—for moderation in any form was a virtue unknown to Sarah Jennings—he and his co-ministers kept the Queen in abject subjection and in her name ruled the country despotically.

But at length the growing irritation of the Sovereign at the thraldom in which she remained and the increased discontent of the nation found an outlet, and the flood of dissatisfaction which issued forth swept the Whigs from power.

Anne, always impressionable, invariably relying on the guidance and support of some stronger nature than her own, now lived entirely under the influence of Abigail Masham, the bedchamber woman detested of the Whigs, a relative of Harley, the Tory leader, and strongly biassed in his favour. Much has been said and written on the subjugation of Queen Anne by her favourites, yet an intelligent observer can easily see that the reason why she trusted so much to those in immediate attendance on her person lay in her intense desire for sympathy and cordial help. None of the Whig leaders, certainly not Godolphin, Marlborough, nor Sunderland, ever displayed any kindly attachment to Her Majesty or any sympathetic appreciation of the difficulties which harassed her.

It was a coarse and brutal age; woman held but a very subsidiary part in ordinary life, unless, indeed, she acted as the man's mistress, when her power knew no limits for the time being; manners, though formal, were rough, and a Queen, unless a very strong-minded person, naturally fell under the superior domination of some man, as Mary did to William.

But Anne's husband, Prince George of Denmark, possessed no individuality whatsoever. "I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober, there is nothing in him," said Charles II. reflectively one day, and even James II., apparently completely devoid of humour, called his son-in-

law "Est-il possible?" taking kindly to a nickname by which Prince George was known among the courtiers, from the one expression which provided the gamut of his sensations, whether the occasion might be the result of a horse race or the outcome of a revolution.

Deriving no aid from her husband, the Queen turned to the stronger nature of Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough, and when the violence of that termagant could no longer be borne with patience, yielded herself to the gentler obsequiousness of Abigail Hill, the substitution of favourite producing a greater change in the aspect of the political world.

Secretly, but steadily, Robert Harley insinuated himself into the confidence of his royal mistress; by little and little he encouraged her to exercise her prerogative and satisfy her own wishes until, at last yielding to his persuasion, she, of her own volition, on June 13, 1710, dismissed Lord Sunderland, Marlborough's son-in-law, from his office of Secretary of State and gave the seals to Lord Dartmouth.

"I know," wrote the agitated Queen, "that the dismissal of his son-in-law may prove a mortification to the Duke of Marlborough, but must the fate of Europe depend on that and must he be gratified in all his desires?"*

These checks and annoyances in no way improved the temper of Godolphin, who "every day grew sourer and indeed ruder" to the Queen, until Anne, trusting to the support of Harley and Shrewsbury, for both of whom she had, at that time, a personal liking, on August 7, 1710, after a long interview, dismissed the Treasurer and conferred on Harley the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the practical control of the Government. On September 21 Parliament was dissolved; when it reassembled in November, the Tories held a large majority and before the end of the year all the important posts were filled by Tory Ministers, Henry St. John occupying the office of Secretary of State, and the Whig administration became a thing of the past.

To the new Ministry the undeniable fact soon became apparent that the masses of the British people were heartily sick of victories which, while they secured great advantages to foreign nations, dukedoms and perquisites to successful Generals, only laid mortgages on the landed classes and

* "Blenheim Papers," p. 43.

brought dear food and lack of employment to the labouring population.

For all these troubles there was but one panacea—Peace!

The nation required to be released from the heavy expenditure on the war, no less than 255,689 men being paid by British money; to free the Government from the onerous task of finding these funds, peace was essential.

Then began the interminable negotiations, the tortuous intrigues which resulted, after many vicissitudes, in effecting the Peace of Utrecht.

In 1709, before the accession of the Tories to power, sporadic attempts had been made to bring about preliminaries of peace; the resident of the Duke of Holstein, a fussy diplomatist of small abilities but vast assurance named Petkum, taking upon himself to approach de Torcy, the French Secretary of State, with the view of acting as mediatory between France and the Allied Powers. To do him justice he appears to have been an honest broker. Then, as now, honest brokers seldom are conspicuously successful.

Nothing came of the overtures; the Allies, thinking that France was beaten to her knees, put forward such onerous terms as competent statesmen, actuated by a genuine desire for a cessation of hostilities, must have known that King Louis, would, perforce, reject.

The German States felt no desire that hostilities should cease. The Emperor occupied this peculiar position that, having lost all he could lose, it mattered little to him how lengthy the war might be; so long as Great Britain bore the financial stress, so long his Imperial Majesty was willing to continue the contest, and the other German powers fought chiefly to attain their own personal ends. St. John, some few years later, admirably describes the process: "While we had taken the whole burden of war upon us, the entire advantage was to accrue to others."

The ill success of these ventures taught one lesson to British statesmen: if peace were to be secured the negotiations must be taken out of the hands of the Dutch, who hitherto had conducted the conferences. Not only were the States of Holland much under the influence of Marlborough and the Whigs, but the men to whom they entrusted the negotiations showed no fitting capability

for the task, in marked contrast to the French representatives, the Maréchal d'Uxelles and the Abbé de Polignac, "a tall, graceful man with the handsomest delivery," both of whom employed all necessary talents for the appointed work, while the Dutch ambassador, Buys, wasted time and opportunity in interminable harangues, his oratory being described as "that whipped cream, so many words so little to the purpose."*

Indubitably the continued existence of the British Ministry depended upon a favourable peace; the people desired it, the financial needs of the nation demanded it; hitherto the initiative came from de Torcy, this time the English Government took the first step, privately informing the French Minister that more favourable terms might be obtained if negotiations were speedily reopened.

De Torcy at the inception of the conferences used as his intermediary a French priest, the Abbé Gualtier, who, being chaplain to Maréchal Tallard during his stay in England, gained admission to many houses of many people, some of position, some the reverse.

Louis having returned a favourable response to the overtures, Gualtier received specific proposals of peace, to be submitted forthwith for the consideration of his superiors. Yet as the negotiations proceeded the necessity became apparent of entrusting the management of affairs to a person of more importance than the Abbé, who, as the Duc de Berwick slightingly observes, was "of birth altogether ordinary and his faculties agreeable—that is to say, poor."†

The choice fell on Matthew Prior.

The first pale gleams of the rising sun of democracy at this period shone fitfully in many places and in varied climes. By turns the great nations of Europe fell under the control of adventurers of low degree but of high attainments, of seamy past but of brilliant foresight, Alberoni and Ripperdá, Görtz and Dubois directing the destinies of Spain, Sweden and France.

No such gifted intellects, it is true, emerged from this people and were numbered among the British statesmen of the reign of George I., but every now and then, amid all

* "Wentworth Papers," p. 30.
† Berwick's "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 178.

the noble peers and wealthy commoners who ruled the country, by virtue of their patents in the House of Lords or their bought borough seats in the Commons, the name occurs of a self-made man who had contrived to push himself to the front through the mass of privilege and corruption which formed the political world.

Matthew Prior undoubtedly rose from a low condition of life, owing his advancement to the many and varied intellectual qualities he possessed. Unlike others, Arthur Moore, the Craggs, father and son, especially, who contrived to obtain influence and position in the political world, but who also gained considerable wealth, probably by questionable means, Prior lived and died a poor man, at the best only enjoying the small salary of a Commissioner of trade.

In the difficult task of conducting these negotiations he showed much address and, as the lucid and interesting account which he himself has written testifies, proved a worthy opponent even of such a master in the art of diplomacy as de Torcy. The Duke of Shrewsbury, sent later on as plenipotentiary to France, acknowledges that the French diplomatist got the better of him in the negotiations concerning Newfoundland and that the zeal, ability and diligence of Prior gained such advantages as might eventually have resulted.*

Although, in de Torcy's opinion, the preliminaries of peace were so drastic as to demand for England no less than "the mastery of the Mediterranean and Spain, the possession for herself of the whole of the Indies and the taking away from France all that appertained to that crown in America," yet he gave great hopes of a successful issue if this country did not ask to ruin Spain ("abîmer l'Espagne") and engross all the traffic of the world.†

While these secret discussions occupied the time and thoughts of the Ministry attempts were made once more to conciliate the Elector of Hanover and assuage, if not satisfy, any doubts he might feel concerning the attitude of England. For long past Marlborough, fearing that the days of his supremacy were numbered, had spared no effort to ingratiate himself with George Louis and to instil into

* Bath MSS., vol. i., p. 228.

† "Portland Papers," Historical MSS., vol. v., pp. 35, 39.

the mind of that prince grave suspicions of Harley and his colleagues.* To obviate as far as possible the effect of these designs, well known to the Ministry, Harley himself wrote letters expressing his fervid attachment to the Electoral family, and St. John corresponded with Monsieur Robethon, the all-powerful private secretary to George Louis, a man who probably knew more of the secret springs of action at the Court of Hanover than anybody else, perhaps even than the Elector himself.

Later in the year, as a further peace offering, Lord Rivers departed on a mission of compliment and explanation to the Elector George and his mother, while Lord Oxford, as by this time Harley had been created, indited an epistle expressing his devotion, personal and political, to the House of Hanover, a letter written in English, " as he knew that his Highness has an English heart."†

If the Lord Treasurer hoped that these flattering advances would induce George Louis to regard the negotiations with France with a friendly eye he was doomed to complete disappointment.

No desire for peace existed in the Electoral Court unless such peace would give to the German States all the advantages they sought from war. As before the reply to the English communication consisted in the usual polite acknowledgment of Queen Anne's missive; in the case of the Elector, written apparently by Robethon, according to the accredited pattern, but Sophia allowed herself somewhat greater latitude and expatiated on the grateful respect with which she received the Queen's " precious letter "; indeed, as Tindal, the Whig historian, ecstatically remarks, " She behaved in both parts to admiration, as a daughter of England and as a mother of Germany."‡

The real answer to all the correspondence arrived in the person of Baron Bothmar, the presence of this prominent councillor in the Electoral household affording a signal instance of the great importance attributed by the German statesmen to the succession to the British crown and the trend of British policy, for George Louis and the Allies obviously viewed with great concern the progress of the negotiations between France and England.

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 240. † *Ibid.*, p. 197.
‡ Tindal, vol. vi., p. 200.

Always a firm adherent to the Empire, George Louis directed Bothmar to present a memorial to the Queen strongly condemning these preliminaries as being couched in such indefinite, general terms as to bear no concrete value. The Whigs ascribed great importance to this document, which, emanating from the skilful mind of Robethon,* received the finishing touches from the Whig leaders themselves, for as Swift succinctly states, it bears signs of being " all drawn up or at least digested by some party pen on this side of the water."†

The method of the publication excited much dissatisfaction: Bothmar having talked with St. John vaguely on the subject of a memorial, asked if he might leave a paper with the secretary; St. John acquiescing, the document was left and laid aside with some others. A few days afterwards this communication appeared in print, as a Memorial presented officially to the Secretary of State, and caused, as was intended, some annoyance to the Government.

By this act the Elector, through his approved agent, definitely allied himself with the Whig Party and continued to support that party, and that party alone, to the day of his death.

Such steps as these did not tend to diminish political strife. When the session of Parliament opened in December signs appeared that a serious conflict between the two Houses might be expected, for though the Commons with its strong Tory majority supported the proposals for peace, the House of Lords, led by the Whig noblemen, in whose ranks Marlborough now definitely numbered himself, openly expressed its keen disapproval of the policy of the Government.

And in the Ministry itself little unanimity prevailed.

The fiery genius of Henry St. John fretted at the dilatory moderation of the policy pursued by the Lord Treasurer; in truth, in the whole course of English history no two statesmen who worked together for, ostensibly, the same ends and were bound by the same party ties, could differ more fundamentally than Oxford and St. John; the latter an aristocrat by birth and natural instincts, the former possessing none of these attributes.

* British Museum, Addison MSS., 4306.

† Swift, " Last Four Years of Queen Anne," p. 48.

In an age of fine gentlemen, coarse, drunken, dissolute, corrupt fine gentlemen it may be, but still men moulded by certain traditional usages, Harley ever retained strong symptoms of the Puritan manners inherited from his middle-class ancestors and never seemed at ease either with his political or his personal surroundings. St. John, erratic and mercurial, yet held distinct and pronounced political principles, cherishing a deep-seated belief in the value of the party system; Oxford, on the contrary, openly declared his predilection for the middle course and his dislike of active political propaganda; "I cannot but apprehend danger from both sides in the extreme,"* he wrote to Godolphin, at another time even more strongly emphasising his detachment from any definite organisation by the declaration: "I have no inclination to any party, I have no obligation to any party, I have no antipathy to any party."

The one, the most brilliant personality of his age, endowed with "wit, capacity, quickness of comprehension and an excellent taste, the best orator in the House of Commons, admirable conversation, good nature and good manners";† the other, dull and confused in speech—"everything he went to tell you was in the epic way, for he always began in the middle,"‡ slow in decision, undecided in action.

Harley became the first Minister of the Crown owing to his previous performance as a Government official and Speaker of the House of Commons; his early successes may be attributed to the very qualities which weakened him at the crux of his political career, capacity for Parliamentary tactics—a snare both in the eighteenth as in the twentieth century—a strong attachment to the middle course and a love of detail. These were valuable assets to a successful administrator, they were positively detrimental to the leader of a strong aspiring party which derived the essence of its being from a display of activity and vigour and could only maintain its existence by defeating and crushing its political opponents.

But Oxford possessed another quality which stood him in good stead during his whole term of office, his power of attaching to his interest men of marked ability outside the ranks of his Parliamentary followers.

* "Bath Papers," Historical MSS., vol. i., p. 111.
† "Swift's Journal to Stella." ‡ "Spence's Anecdotes," p. 168.

Defoe, by his pen and his intelligence, rendered yeoman service to the Minister who won his allegiance; Prior proved a useful and adroit diplomatist as well as a valuable literary assistant, while it is not too much to say, Swift bore the burden of the Tory propaganda in a manner none but himself could have sustained. Oxford saw the necessity of discrediting his opponents in the eyes of the country; he took the means, then springing into being, of periodical publications, and by each issue strove to destroy the reputation and undermine the policy of the Whig Party. In this project fortune treated him kindly in allowing him —with all his finesses and plausibility, a singularly prosaic and unimaginative politician—the services of the two most fertile and resourceful brains of the period. In Daniel Defoe and in Jonathan Swift the Minister found inspiration when such became necessary, and at the same time the means of promulgating and defending his own schemes and attacking his antagonists through the medium of the most trenchant and powerful pens which have, at any period, enriched English literature.

Partly owing to constitutional liking for the middle course, but also, probably, from a knowledge of the growing influence of St. John, Oxford sought to bring about an understanding with Marlborough. This Marlborough refused. Relying on the support of George Louis, knowing moreover that the Whigs depended for their continuance as a party on the ultimate triumph of the Protestant Succession, he believed that a prospect would again open for him of reasserting his predominance in the country; therefore he advised the Queen to withhold her assent from the proposed preliminaries of peace and himself gave his wholehearted support to the Whigs.

No half-measures now would suffice; as Marlborough refused to co-operate and threw his influence into the scale against the Ministry and the peace, Marlborough must go!

On December 21, 1711, the Duke received an autograph letter from the Queen, dismissing him from all his employments and reciting the terms of a resolution entered on the Minutes of the Privy Council to the following effect: "Being informed that an information was laid before the House of Commons by the Commission of the Public Accounts, Her Majesty thought fit to dismiss him from all

his employments that the matter might undergo impartial investigation." That Anne's letter also contained a complaint of the treatment she personally received from the Duke is evident from his reply to her, but the exact text of her epistle is lost, Marlborough, in an unwonted convulsion of anger, throwing it into the fire.*

After the dismissal of Marlborough and the appointment of the Duke of Ormonde as Commander-in-Chief in his place, for fifteen months the negotiations continued their tedious course. The Ministry wanted peace, it knew that if once involved in the slough of regular diplomatic discussion those who opposed their plans could protract proceedings to an extent sufficient to imperil all chance of a successful issue; it therefore dealt directly with de Torcy himself, at Paris, while permitting the formal meeting of plenipotentiaries at Utrecht to continue.

The year 1712 waned; November came and went; the French, though willing enough to treat and discuss the clauses of the treaty, showed little desire to bring the matters contained therein to a definite conclusion.

St. John, now raised to the peerage by the title of Viscount Bolingbroke, the name by which history knows him so well, lost patience, and at length despatched a direct intimation that if the points in dispute were not settled forthwith hostilities would be renewed in the Spring.

This firm language produced the required effect. The most important of that group of diplomatic instruments known as the Treaty of Utrecht was signed on April 11, 1713.

Austria alone refused participation, partly from chagrin, partly from traditional policy: "it was always the custom of the Court of Vienna not to desire to accede to the different treaties at the same time as the other Crowns, believing by this to show the superiority of their grandeur and power";† such is the evidence of a contemporary writer, and the Imperial Ministers, though powerless to stop the negotiations, yet sullenly and resentfully abstained from becoming parties to the peace.

The treaty, bitterly reviled and opposed at the time of its signature, formed, in after years, the basis of the attack on the Tory Ministers, and at the hands of the Whig

* Marlborough (Coxe), vol. vi., p. 152.
† Berwick, vol. ii., p. 199.

historians has met invariably with most drastic and illiberal criticism.

To the political activity of the Whig Party at this period the country owes many evils; from their deliberate designs it has suffered serious injury, for not only did they introduce and systematise corruption in our Parliamentary institutions, but, by their considered action, they poisoned the very sources of our national history.

They proscribed as Jacobites all who differed from them in any matter appertaining to the national polity, by this ostracism excluding their opponents from public life, and thus not only retaining political power exclusively in their own hands, but also preventing any rivalry to that horde of obsequious writers who, whilst pretending to record actual events during the reigns of the first two princes of the House of Hanover, in reality only produced elaborate eulogies on Whig principles and triumphant pæans on Whig performance.

Paul de Rapin-Thoyras, a Huguenot refugee, seeking asylum in this country as a follower of William of Orange, and the Rev. Nicolas Tindal, a latitudinarian clergyman of pronounced Whig tendencies, the writer of a continuation to the work commenced by de Thoyras, are regarded as the standard authentic authors, their efforts being supplemented by Oldmixon, a professed partisan of the Whigs so extreme as to invalidate his evidence even in the opinion of Lord Macaulay, himself in all his productions, historical, reflective or critical, a victim to the vice of distorting his subject into an instrument for political propaganda. Abel Boyer, Swift's "Whig dog"—whom the Rev. Mr. Etough thought to be "a very silly fellow," but who "preserved some valuable material" by the compilation of a political gazette—may be added to the number; all these contemporary writers belonging to one party only, that of the Whigs. Yet with the best intention in the world, as history proves, a Whig historian could only see events through Whig spectacles, which had not been adapted to correct the hereditary astigmatism which afflicted all politicians of that party in the eighteenth century and which occasionally attacks their successors in the present day.

From the works of these scribes the generally accepted

view of the Treaty of Utrecht has been deduced: that of unqualified disapproval.

Yet every treaty effected by this country for generations afterwards was based upon that of Utrecht; the provisos it contained operated successfully, the views expressed antagonistic to it proved, by the irrefutable logic of events, to be wrong, and important advantages accrued to the nation immediately upon its signature.

By the articles of the treaty the King of Spain renounced all claims to the throne of France, yielded Minorca and Gibraltar to England, and Sicily to the Duke of Savoy. Louis XIV. explicitly recognised the claims of the House of Hanover to the British crown, promised to exclude the Pretender from France, rased the fortifications of Dunkirk, ceded Hudson Bay, Nova Scotia, St. Christopher and Newfoundland, with the exception of certain rights reserved to French fishermen, and gave special trading advantages to British merchants in the Spanish possessions, both in Europe and the West Indies.

Charles II., by his foreign and commercial policy, laid the foundations of England's Colonial greatness, the Treaty of Utrecht completed the edifice, and from the date of its signature Great Britain may be deemed the most important oversea power in Europe.

Expert opinion has declared: "The Treaty of Utrecht left England the first State in the world and she continued for some years to be first without a rival."*

George Louis loathed the treaty. In common with the rulers of the lesser German States he wished the war to continue until the German Princes obtained the territory and power they coveted, more especially as the greater proportion of the charge and expense incurred by the hostilities was drawn, not from their own coffers, but from the wealth and industry of the British people.

The clause guaranteeing the succession of the House of Hanover to the British throne signified little to him; his political purview at that time surveyed alone the vista of Continental affairs and, even in that direction, was limited to those areas absorbed or affected by the Germanic confederation. For English interests he cared nothing; he had no reason to do so; for instance, he highly approved

* "The Expansion of England," pp. 131, 132.

of the Barrier Treaty which, by the ineptitude of Townshend, the Whig diplomatist who negotiated it, practically yielded to the United Provinces the whole trade of the wealthy Netherlands, to the complete exclusion of British commodities. But the inclinations of George conflicted diametrically with the intention and policy of the Tory Ministry; from this period the Elector became not only the tutelary saint but the inspiring essence of the Whig Party.

The friction between the Courts of St. James and Herrenhausen in no way diminishing, fresh envoys came and went, the caustic old Electress, however, expressing great doubt as to the success of her own emissary, Freiherr von Grote, for "if one were to send an angel from paradise, he would find it hard to please all sorts of people who cannot agree among themselves."*

Instructions to this agent enjoined him to press with all tactful insistency the necessity for an allowance being voted to Sophia by the British Parliament, she being heir presumptive to the throne.

The situation accentuated a characteristic trait in the Hanoverian character. A proposal to extract an income from the British Treasury contained a principle highly commendable and greatly to be encouraged, but, as then happened, a demand for money from the Electoral coffers to defray the expenses of its representative and, incidentally, to suborn Whig partisans, met with an emphatic refusal, the answer of George Louis to the request being "a flat denial and that he would not give a penny above what the late Mr. Schutz had."†

Sophia, though evidently herself desirous of supplementing the inadequate allowance given her by her son, yet expressed, in a truly individual manner, her doubts as to the advantages of an English subsidy: "she should not mind a pension, but she was contented with her German servants; if she received English money she would be required to augment her household with English servants," which, she implied distinctly, would be a nuisance.‡

It is evident from the correspondence extant that a divergence of opinion, if not principle, in the matter of the

* Sophie Charlotte, "Letters," p. 329.
† Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 468.
‡ Sophie Charlotte, "Letters," p. 314.

succession at this time existed between Sophia and her eldest son.

Notwithstanding the statement of her biographers that the Electress remained indifferent to the honours which might devolve upon her, to those who read between the lines of her many references to this subject, it is manifest that she took the greatest pride in the prospect, that her remarks about "the affairs of England" not causing her "sleepless nights," of her "speaking as a spectre and suffering from the incurable disease of being eighty-three years old in October," were mere feminine attempts to simulate carelessness. She enjoyed the advent of the many Englishmen who thronged to Herrenhausen "pour jeter les pames, quand je feray mon entrée à Londres," and indulged in happy anticipation of that auspicious event.

But George Louis, outwardly at least, took but little interest in the question of the English succession, Leibnitz distinctly stating that he referred to his mother all matters "properly appertaining to the person of the coming successor and which have nothing in common with his quality of Elector and ally."*

He never lived on really amicable terms with his mother; instances of his disregard of her wishes, of his cold neglect of her comfort and even of direct opposition to her action can be found. On one occasion he forces her to write to her dearly beloved niece and constant correspondent, the Raugräfin Louise: "It almost seems as if my son would rather offend me than the Ladies of Hanover";† George Louis having deeply wounded his mother's susceptibilities by giving the ordinary nobility of Hanover precedence over his cousin, the Raugräfin, one of her brother's natural children, a proceeding which drew some most uncomplimentary remarks concerning him from the very outspoken Duchess of Orleans.

Towards his son, George Augustus, he invariably displayed, not only a total want of affection, but at times a positive dislike, debarring the Prince from public functions and acting towards him in a manner alike unbecoming in a sovereign and unnatural in a parent.

Bothmar, who knew most of the secrets of the Electoral

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 357.

† Bodeman, "von Ilten Letters," 1879, p. 1098.

Court, writing to von Ilten, committed himself to the statement: "I am very much mistaken if he (the Electoral Prince) has not more inclination for this crown than his father, but this had better remain between ourselves as it would not do for our English friends to be aware of an indifference on this head."*

It is possible that the Elector disagreed with some of his sanguine followers and held grave doubts as to whether the English throne would be either easy or safe to occupy.

Rumours arose of the conversion of the Chevalier St. George to the Anglican Church, an event which, if perchance it should come about, would materially alter the situation both theoretically and practically. Sophia and her son definitely stated, through the medium of Leibnitz, that they were "for the principles of hereditary succession and do not believe that the Acts of Parliament have properly given to them a new right, but have excluded, solely for reasons of national safety, certain persons who preceded them."†

Obviously, if the legitimate heir to the throne complied with all the requisite stipulations of the Act of Succession, George or his mother could only succeed as usurpers with a purely Parliamentary title. Also certain of the Whigs, fearing the manœuvres of Oxford and doubting the adherence of the British people to the House of Hanover, pressed George Louis to make matters sure by coming to England with an army;‡ but such proposal opened many eventualities, the chance of peaceably ascending a throne and the necessity of securing one by force of arms presenting two very diverse prospects. With customary caution the Elector held his hand until the outlook became clearer.

He might well doubt the sincerity of either of the British political parties.

The adherence of the Whigs to the so-called Protestant Succession in no way implied any profound attachment to the principles of the reformed religion; a dislike to Roman Catholicism undoubtedly actuated the majority of them, a vicarious attachment to some Presbyterian mode of observance may have influenced a portion, but the real motive which prompted their actions sprang from very different sources.

* Bodemann, "von Ilten Letters," 1879, p. 1098.
† Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 318. ‡ Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 472.

They knew that the term Protestant Succession, under the circumstances then existing, meant that a foreign and exotic dynasty would sit on the throne of England, a series of rulers whose interests and predilections inevitably tended towards their Continental dominions, and so the real administration of affairs, the material sweets of office, absolutely would lie in the hands of those great families who, by their wealth and local influence, at all times exercised considerable control over public policy and held the means of shaping to a great extent the constitution of the House of Commons. They thought, and thought with reason, that probably these powers would be considerably less under a native hereditary King than under a foreign-bred monarch who owed his throne mainly to the help of their party; as Lockhart of Carnwath pungently put it: "They don't so much value who shall be King, as whose King he shall be."* Actuated by these feelings they used the whole force of their political energy for the purpose of establishing the sovereignty of such a nominal ruler, entirely careless as to whether he owned qualities likely to be beneficial to the kingdom or otherwise.

On the other hand the Tories, with all their faults, strove for a logical and unselfish end: the maintenance, if possible, of the legitimate line and the preservation of the supremacy of the Anglican Church. Their difficulties and the cause of much of that duplicity which they showed—and not only they but others, separate from their party but professing much the same aims—lay in the fact that the two objects were incompatible. Yet a large proportion, possibly the majority, of the nation held the like opinions; the landed gentry, the parochial clergy and many of the rural population showed strong attachment to the cause of James, the lineal King, and were equally staunch in supporting the ascendancy of the Church of England.

The evils attendant on the rule of a sovereign born and bred a foreigner, whose heart lay in his own country and with his own people, had been amply demonstrated during the reign of William III. Yet William and his wife stood very near to the direct line of descent; how, therefore, would it be when a complete stranger, who, moreover, bore no good character for benignity of disposition or courtesy of

* "Atholl Papers," Historical MSS. Report, p. 63.

demeanour, should fill the throne ? Naturally the thoughts of those who observed the results of the experiment already tried in extraneous rule reverted to James, the legitimate heir, with the hope that the grandson of Charles I. might return to the Church for which that monarch gave his life.

It is impossible to believe that any serious statesman, even the most unmitigated advocate for the divine right of kings, ever contemplated at this time the establishment of Roman Catholicism in this country, and few, if any, believed that a sovereign who openly professed that form of belief would be able to maintain his throne against the popular prejudice which existed.

It is now known from the Stuart papers and kindred documents that, for at least two years before the death of Anne, Bolingbroke, Oxford, and, there is strong reason to believe, Marlborough also, corresponded with James.

To speak of treachery and treason in this connection is to be oblivious of the true aspect of the situation. The Constitution of the country practically lay in the melting-pot. The extreme Whigs knew well the shape they desired it to assume, that of an aristocratic oligarchy with all the administrative power in the hands of a few reigning families. But to the Tories and many others, not members of the Tory Party, this scheme was anathema; they believed in the efficacy of a monarchy, a monarchy preserved with all essential authority, although pruned of those prerogatives likely to conflict with the necessary powers of Parliament. Their difficulty lay in the choice of a sovereign to wear the crown. For a time the assumption of the regal position by Mary and subsequently Anne, the legitimate descendants of a legitimate King, obviated the difficulty, but on the death of the latter, now imminent, all the complications would arise afresh.

The Act of Settlement only theoretically solved the difficulty. The remoteness of the Hanoverian family from the direct line might well have caused a fear that its advent to the throne would plunge this country into the troubles of a disputed succession. The age of the Electress Sophia, coupled with the disagreeable character and unsympathetic attitude of her son and heir, also may have induced the belief that the difficulties of persuading the nation to accept, without demur, these aspirants would be

very great and that a seriously unsettled condition of national affairs must ensue.

It appears to be almost a certain hypothesis that, until March 13, 1714, when James, in a letter to Gualtier, declared his unalterable determination not to change his religion,* both Oxford and Bolingbroke relied upon the legitimate claimant conforming to the Anglican Church. In the most interesting correspondence between Bolingbroke and d'Iberville, the French envoy, the absolute necessity of this change of religion is urged on several occasions; in one communication Bolingbroke positively declaring that all the most faithful adherents of the Stuart family were of the opinion that the British people would rather accept for a king a Turk than a Roman Catholic, and later Gualtier tells the Chevalier de St. George himself that many of the Tories supported the House of Hanover because of the creed which he, James, openly professed.

Berwick, at that time the mentor of James, leant his weight against these remonstrances, the force of opposition becoming so heavy that Bolingbroke found himself compelled to reiterate his own conviction that the Stuart Prince would never be king so long as he remained constant to the Roman Catholic Church.†

No theological prejudice can have inspired such an opinion. Bolingbroke, as his later writings amply demonstrate, felt but little attachment to any form of revealed religion, and although, in his early career, he may have expressed some vicarious adherence to the so-called High-Church tenets, there are excellent reasons for believing that this confession of faith owed its origin not to any attachment to the most advanced doctrines of the Anglican establishment, but to the desire to escape from the ministration of the Rev. Doctor Manton, the spiritual adviser of his family, a painstaking divine, the meticulous logic of whose mind urged him, as a sacred duty, to write and, presumably, to preach one hundred and nineteen sermons on the hundred and nineteenth psalm.

It is obvious in every line of the correspondence that the question of the religious attitude of the Stuart Prince dominated the whole situation.

On this subject James wrote three letters, dated

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 525. † "Stuart Papers," vol. i., p. 6.

March 3, 1714, one to his sister, the Queen, one to Lord Oxford, and the third to Bolingbroke, but in none of these epistles does he offer the slightest encouragement to the hope that he himself will desert the faith in which he had been born and educated.

That these declarations left the Tories eminently dissatisfied and entirely at a loss with regard to their future policy is shown by after-events; especially by their complete unpreparedness to formulate defined and concrete plans on the sudden and unexpected death of the Queen.

The pronounced partiality of George Louis for the Whigs, the age of the Electress Sophia, which probably ensured the succession of her son, undoubtedly influenced the attitude of Bolingbroke towards James Stuart and may possibly have produced an effect also on his colleague Oxford; certainly the position of affairs caused the former statesman to make diplomatic advances to the Duchess Anna of Savoy, the daughter of Henriette and grand-daughter of Charles I., thus some degrees nearer to the legitimate line than the House of Hanover.

These indications of faltering friendship to the Electoral family and readiness to establish alliances on the Continent excited the suspicions of both George Louis and his mother; causing also grave perturbation to the Whigs, who eagerly sought for some opportunity of securing a party advantage against their enterprising adversaries.

As early as April, 1713, Lord Halifax and eight noted Whigs dined together—the invariable preliminary for any political intrigue in the eighteenth century—and came to the conclusion that the only hope for their party lay in the Electoral Prince coming to England, "as an infallible remedy against present evil." Halifax was so convinced of the advisability of such a course that he counselled the somewhat undignified manœuvre that the Prince should "come post with a *valet de chambre* and two footmen under another name, without his Order of the Garter, without liveries, and take his passage in the pacquet boat," being provided with a false passport "taken out under somebody else's description."*

The journey did not take place, prevented by the refusal of George Louis to allow his son to venture on such an

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 492.

expedition; the Elector being of the opinion, so the Duchess of Orleans asserts, that the Prince's bad manners would do more harm to the Electoral cause than his presence could benefit. Coupled with this denial came also a curt intimation that no contributions would be forthcoming from the Electoral pockets to the Whig fund for purchasing seats in the British Parliament at the forthcoming election; notwithstanding that Lord Halifax computed that, instead of £100,000 already demanded for that purpose, a moiety of the sum would suffice, the old adage that " half a loaf is better than no bread " appealing to the Whig appetite.

Lord Cadogan, however, recommended a slight increase of " 6 or 7,000 £ sterling to secure thereby six or seven voices in the house of peers," supplementing this advice by suggesting that pensions to " five or six poor lords as a capital affair "* would be very useful towards obtaining a majority. If the information given concerning the amounts to be paid to individual peers and editors of newspapers is correct, the sum estimated by Lord Cadogan would appear to be more than sufficient; for the editor of the *Flying Post* received only £50 for his adhesion and Lord Fitzwalter the sum of £60; the power of the Press commanding almost as high a value as the vote of a " poor peer."

Not even the desirability of influencing the mind of Parliament by the usual means of persuasion then prevalent could at any time loosen the purse strings of George Louis, although, as his envoy Schutz pathetically remarks to Robethon: " you cannot imagine to yourself what prejudice this excessive parsimony does us."†

The elections were lost; the Whig leaders complained that they were abandoned; on the approaching session of Parliament, driven to desperation by their doubts and fears, they urged the Electress with such assiduity that, finally, they induced her to perform her first overt act towards asserting her right to the British throne. At her instigation Schutz, the Hanoverian envoy, applied to Lord Chancellor Harcourt for the writ of summons to the Electoral Prince calling him to take his seat in the House of Lords as Duke of Cambridge, the patent for which had been conferred on him in the year 1706.

The Chancellor, much embarrassed by the unexpected request, received the application with distinct disapproval

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 506 *et passim.* † *Ibid.*, p. 583.

and did not comply with the command, stating that he must refer the matter to the Queen, although, as he was careful to explain, the document had been sealed in the usual way and, with the writs of summons for the other peers, lay ready to be delivered when called for.*

To Anne, ill and depressed, with no friend or counsellor on whom she could rely, herself not gifted with much resolution or courage, the attempt to force into her presence her successor came as an irritating insult: "I never saw Her Majesty so much moved in my life," writes Oxford to his cousin in Hanover; "she looks upon it as that she is treated with scorn and contempt"; then, speaking on the subject to the Duke of Kent, the Treasurer continued, that to bring over one of the Hanoverian family would be "to place her coffin before Her Majesty's eyes."†

It is possible that Anne's strong objection to the visit of the Electoral Prince may have been due to the knowledge that the Whigs, as Lockhart alleges, made preparation for the Prince to be attended always by a large armed retinue; "the Queen being apprised thereof was frightened out of her wits."‡ Angry and alarmed as personally she might be at the evident anticipation of her death, yet Oxford gave the really cogent reason why the proposed course would be eminently injudicious: "It will infallibly change the argument and shift the dispute. It will no more be between a Popish Pretender and the Serene House of Hanover, but people will immediately change it into a contest between the present possessor and the future successor. It is the mutual interest of the Queen and the Elector to have a firm friendship and that the world should know it so; if the world should get it into their heads that the Queen, so much beloved, is hardly used, God knows what may be the consequence."§

A day or two after this indiscreet application of Schutz, Sir Charles Cotterel, the Master of the Ceremonies, called upon the luckless diplomatist and intimated to him that the Queen commanded him no longer to attend the Court, an order which Schutz perforce obeyed, until recalled to Hanover by his master.

Anne, like most weak women, deeply resented any attack

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 417.
† Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 574. ‡ Lockhart, vol. i., p. 464.
§ "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 418 *et passim.*

upon her dignity. While still excited by the ill-judged attempt she wrote letters to each of the three members of the Electoral house, epistles which showed in every line the passionate irritation she felt; although, perhaps, in the cogent style of the missive to George Louis the hand of Bolingbroke may be traced: "As rumour increases that my cousin the Electoral Prince has resolved to come over to settle in my lifetime in my dominions, I do not choose to delay a moment to write to you about this and to communicate to you my sentiments upon a subject of this importance. I then freely own that I cannot imagine that a prince who possesses the knowledge and penetration of your Electoral Highness can ever contribute to such an attempt, and that I believe you are too just to allow that any infringement should be made upon my sovereignty which you would not choose should be made upon your own; I am firmly persuaded you would not suffer the smallest diminution of your authority, I am no less delicate in that respect, and I am determined to oppose a project so contrary to my royal authority however fatal the consequences may be."*

The consequences, indeed, proved fatal in a manner little dreamt of by the writer.

Although George Louis, with his usual phlegmatic moderation, returned a polite answer and recalled his envoy, Anne's letter to the old Electress Sophia, couched in equally caustic terms, produced deplorable results.

Herrenhausen, with its sylvan groves, a pleasant contrast to the surrounding country, always held a warm place in Sophia's heart. There, when unduly distressed by the blatant infidelities of her husband or the callous neglect of her son, she found consolation in the voices of nightingales and the frogs, an odd conjunction of her own choosing. Always a vigorous walker—perhaps an attribute of her Stuart blood, for Charles II. invariably walked fast, a specific against bores and duns—her continuous perambulations caused some annoyance and inconvenience to her visitors, whom the stringent etiquette of the Electoral household compelled to share in the amusement of their serene hostess. "The gaiety and diversion of this Court consists entirely in a regular promenade that is made every evening in the orangery and garden and lasts for two or

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 621.

three hours, in which the old Electress performs to a miracle, fatiguing all the company with walking after her without in the least incommoding herself."* Such is the description of an eye-witness of the habits of Sophia, which she continued, literally, till the day of her death.

Robethon in a letter to Lord Polwarth distinctly states that the behaviour of the Hanoverian envoy, Schutz, must be attributed entirely to the personal action of the Electress. "On her own initiative and without speaking to either M. l'Electeur or any of his Ministers she instructed Schutz to take the course he did in demanding the writ," the source of all the difficulty, the unfortunate official not daring to disobey, being credited to the Court of St. James both by the Electress and by George Louis.†

Although it may well be doubted if Sophia would have ventured the despatch of an envoy on such an important errand, one touching closely the interests of the dynasty, without any consultation with her eldest son and heir, yet, to an extent, corroborative evidence exists that George Louis disapproved of the behaviour of Schutz, declared that his emissary had not obeyed the orders given and that he, the Elector, discountenanced the mission, consequently also the interference of his mother; a deduction which can be sustained by reference to the allusions which appear in the correspondence of Sophia herself.

The receipt of Queen Anne's plain-spoken epistle, the direct and brusque intimation that any attempt to thrust upon her during her lifetime the presence of a prince of the Electoral house would be most prejudicial to the security of the succession, made a deep impression on the aged Princess, who with all her affected indifference yet regarded, with proud anticipation, the prospect of ascending the throne of Great Britain.

Always a great conversationalist, she discussed the unfortunate occurrence with the Countess von Brouckenberg, her favourite lady-in-waiting: "This affair will make me ill, I shall die of it," she reiterated, then with true feminine logic declared that she would cause the "gracieuse letter" to be published so that the world should know that it was not "her fault if her children lost the succession to the three crowns."‡

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 200.

† "Marchmont Papers," vol. ii., p. 399. ‡ Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 459.

Although seriously unwell and much shaken with the vexation and annoyance caused by the knowledge that a false step had been taken, the Electress, on May 28, 1714, after dining in public, expressed a strong inclination for her usual promenade. Descending into the garden, accompanied by the Electoral Princess, Caroline, she walked for some time, talking about all sorts of matters with her usual vivacity. Suddenly she tottered, then moved with lassitude and weakness. It began to rain heavily, all the Court retired and the old Electress sought the shelter of an adjoining summer-house, but had hardly taken ten steps towards it when she stopped and exclaiming, "I am very ill, give me your hand," dropped fainting into the arms of the Electoral Princess. The attendants hurried to the scene, among them a Mr. Molyneux, a secret emissary of the Duke of Marlborough, who declares that on his arrival he found the Princess dead.*

To attribute the decease of a woman eighty-four years of age entirely to mental irritation and annoyance caused by the receipt of a disagreeable epistle is a large assumption; yet if the evidence of two persons in close intimacy with the Electress shortly before her death is to be believed, the chagrin caused by the letters written by Anne and the perception, which one so quick-witted as Sophia must have felt, that by a premature and ill-advised step the effect of the restraint and diplomatic reserve of many years had been imperilled, acting upon a physical constitution somewhat impaired by age, induced a seizure which terminated fatally.

Had Providence permitted Sophia to ascend the throne of Great Britain, she probably would have added one more to the illustrious Queens who ruled these islands; fate ordained otherwise, and even denied her that which she is reported to have desired, burial in Westminster Abbey. Her son, the Elector, caused her remains to be placed in the mausoleum of his family at Hanover, and the only record of her great ambition consists in portions of the inscription on her coffin:†

MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ HERES NATA . . .
AD SUCCESSIONEM MAGNÆ BRITANNIÆ NOMINATA
M.D.C.C.I.

* Marlborough (Coxe), vol. iii., p. 574.
† "History of the Guelphs," p. 464.

CHAPTER VI

GUELPH SUCCEEDS STUART

According to Robethon the death of Sophia produced two beneficial effects: a sincere reconciliation between the Elector and the Electoral Prince "which," as the writer somewhat sardonically observes, "at present is genuine and straightforward," also "greater attention towards the affairs of England in which he (the Elector) has taken much trouble since the death of Madame, his Mother, and now that he is the direct heir to the throne, he is willing to do for the matter all that it requires."*

In one respect, at least, George took action.

He accompanied his cold response to the heated epistle of Queen Anne by a direct intimation, through Kreyenberg, the resident, that he expected his own name to be substituted in the Liturgy for that of his mother, thereby inferring that he intended to assert, if necessary, his claim to the crown of Great Britain.

Robethon, who knew all that could be known in the Electoral circles, concludes his letter by informing his correspondent, Lord Polwarth: "Mon^{r} Electeur always signs George Louis, but in England as it is the custom only to put one name in the prayers, he prefers that of George"; and by the name of "George" this, the first King of England of the House of Guelph, is known in the roll of British Sovereigns.

Notwithstanding the declaration of the Secretary, George personally still took but small part in the efforts made on his behalf to advance his pretensions to the British throne, but the junto, to call it by the name always accorded in contemporary literature, of German statesmen, Bernsdorff, Bothmar, von Ilten, and Robethon, the secret spring of many intrigues, used all their energies and talents to bring about the possession of that which they regarded as a necessary operation for the benefit of Hanover in particular

* "Marchmont Papers," vol. ii., p. 405.

ELECTRESS SOPHIA OF HANOVER.

and the Empire at large. In this direction they met with hearty support from the Whig politicians, who day by day saw more clearly that their sole hope of regaining political ascendancy lay in the accession of the House of Hanover, in this course obtaining material assistance from the divisions arising in the ranks of their opponents.

Little by little from the beginning of the year 1714 Oxford lost influence over the Tories, the predominance of Bolingbroke in like proportion increasing. Knowing, to use his own language, that the House of Commons " grew like hounds fond of the men who showed them game," he resolved to establish definitely his own supremacy and to wean the Tories from allegiance to their former chief.

To effect this purpose he appealed at once to the devotion to the Church of England innate in the Tory nature, and in pursuance of this policy introduced into Parliament a measure, at once intolerant and tyrannical, aimed at the Nonconformists, commonly known at that time as the Schism Bill.

> " Wherever God erects a House of Prayer,
> The Devil always builds a Chapel there."

Thus Defoe depicts the views of a " True-Born Englishman "; assuredly this spirit entirely permeated the Schism Act, assigning everything connected with a chapel, in contradistinction to the church, to the influence of the powers of evil.

It is doubtful if Bolingbroke and his supporters seriously intended to enforce the provisions of this Bill, which, when it became law, absolutely prevented a Nonconformist parent from educating his children in accordance with his own religious views; indeed, to those who survey the intrigues and manœuvres of these times through the microscope of history, it is easy to perceive that this legislation was a covert attack aimed at Oxford; as Defoe observes, nothing " but a mine to blow up the White Staff."

To the Lord Treasurer, descended from a Puritan family, himself tinged with Nonconformist opinions, the proposed enactment presented, at least in the hopes of his would-be supplanters, the horns of a dilemma, either to vote against his Party or his conscience.

Proceedings of this nature proved totally subversive of Ministerial confidence or Party discipline. Bolingbroke,

weary of the dissensions which tore the Government to pieces, and almost despairing of the future of the Tory Party, confided to Swift: "If my grooms did not live a happier life than I have done for this great while, I am sure they would quit my service"; and the tension told on Oxford also, for, if Lockhart's narrative is true, not only did he "speak misteriouslie and in half sentences on most important subjects, but gave himself up to so great intemperance as scarcely to go sober once in a week and not before 4 in the morning to bed."* His transient popularity with the Queen vanished; the aversion of Anne and, equally important, of the bedchamber woman, grew apace until, all trust and confidence having been completely alienated, on Tuesday, July 27, 1714, Anne dismissed her Minister.

The Council met in the evening and, before them all, the Queen deprived Oxford of his office. The scene, recorded in a narrative written by Defoe, evidently at the instigation of the ex-Treasurer, must have been of a violent character, the disgraced statesman, losing all self-control, indulging in the most bitter invective towards his colleagues.

The account concludes with a statement, unfortunately too true, that Oxford's wild words and the whole unseemly occurrence made a deep impression upon Queen Anne and, possibly, hastened her end.

The fallen Minister, after his tirade, left the Council Chamber; the Queen, much discomposed in mind and body, bitterly complaining of the conduct of her late Treasurer, retired to her apartments, leaving the Cabinet still sitting.

The discussions would have been resumed the next day, July 29, but the Queen's alarming illness caused an unavoidable postponement.

She grew rapidly worse and fell into a comatose condition, "but by cupping was much relieved"; then, on Friday, 30th, a second fit of an apoplectic nature occurring, she soon became deprived of speech and almost of motion.

This crisis forced the Council to a decision.

A letter written by General Stanhope to the Emperor Charles V. throws light upon the occurrences and is interesting not only as a relation of the trend of events, but also as a demonstration of the complete dependence on foreign adhesion, the total subserviency of English interests to the

* Lockhart, vol. i., p. 370.

dominancy of the German powers, which the Whigs advocated and pursued in order to maintain their own political supremacy.

After recounting the illness of Anne, Stanhope continues: "She recovered a little about 11 o'clock and the Council, which had assembled, profited by this interval of health to persuade the Queen to nominate the Duke of Shrewsbury for the High Treasurer, instead of the five Commissioners proposed, who would have been subordinate to Lord Bolingbroke as first Minister. The Council continued its sitting and gave all necessary commands for keeping public order and assuring the taking possession to Monsignor the Elector." After detailing the efforts of the doctors and the drastic measures they adopted to restore the Queen, which, as all other incidents of a similar nature, leave the impression on modern readers that the medical faculty in the past were eminently successful regicides, Stanhope adds: "they are of the opinion that the Queen cannot live a dozen hours," and that "this accident, sudden and unforeseen, came like a thunderbolt to the Jacobites," who had taken none of the measures necessary to carry out their own plans. "I venture to assure your Imperial Majesty that, if the doctors prophesy truly, Mon^{sr} l'Electeur of Han^{vr} will be proclaimed King and will take possession of the realm as peaceably as any of his predecessors have done . . . I believe, Sire, that it is my duty to communicate to your Imperial Majesty that which I have been able to learn in this very delicate conjunction; I hope I shall be saying nothing new in assuring you that all who are honest people are disgusted at the *treachery* of the late Ministry to your Imperial Majesty, . . . and that they will when occasion offers do their best to repair this dishonour of the nation. I flatter myself that I am not mistaken . . . that your Imperial Majesty will always interest yourself in the maintenance of a free England, will there support the rights of the House of Brunswick and will protest against the common enemy when such may be necessary."* Surely a somewhat servile epistle for an English statesman to write to a foreign potentate, and a somewhat futile hope to express that the protection of a Habsburg would be necessary to maintain the freedom of the people of Great Britain.

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 504.

If Bolingbroke had known the long-conceived plan of the Whigs, and the concurrence therewith of the Duke of Shrewsbury, it is doubtful if he would have accepted the downfall of his hopes without a struggle; as circumstances fell out, either the Secretary, or some other peer with his consent, presented the Duke to the Queen, who found strength to express her approval of the proposal and to hand the staff herself to the new Lord Treasurer, murmuring a hope that he would use it for the good of her people.

Falling into a lethargy immediately after this effort, Anne became insensible and remained so until her death.

Upon the appointment of the Treasurer the Council at once took steps to ensure the succession of the House of Hanover. The Life Guards were ordered to be in readiness and the Heralds to be prepared to proclaim the King; forthwith James Craggs, the younger, was despatched hurriedly to Hanover bearing a letter to the Elector George acquainting him with the imminence of the Queen's death; the same emissary also being instructed to carry directions to the British Ambassador at the Hague concerning the demand upon the States General to fulfil their treaty obligations and, if necessary, supply troops to the amount of 6,000 men to support the Protestant Succession.

Anne expired on Sunday, August 1, 1714. With her the Stuart dynasty terminated; with her died also the hopes and aspirations of the greatest British statesman of the era.

To Bolingbroke the death of Anne brought the ruin of all his schemes and ambitions. His oft-quoted letter to Swift absolutely epitomises the situation: "The Earl of Oxford was removed on Tuesday, the Queen died on Sunday; what a world this is and how does fortune banter us."* But he also saw clearly that now for all time he must give up hopes of founding that system of Tory supremacy which he had designed and to which he trusted not only for the triumph but also for the safety of himself and his Party. To Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, the sincere Jacobite, he confessed: "I am not in the least intimidated from any consideration of the Whig malice and power. The Grief of my soul is this, I can see plainly that the Tory Party is gone."†

With a lingering hope that his great talents might have elicited a sympathetic feeling even in the frigid soul of

* Swift's "Works," vol. xvi., p. 178. † Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 65.

George, he sent the King a letter which none can deem to have been written in other than "in a way becoming me," and which concludes as follows: "Quant à moi, j'ose supplier votre Majesté d'être persuadée, que les mêmes principes d'honneur et de conscience, qui m'aient porté à servir la feue Reine jusqu'à sa mort, avec constance et avec fidelité m'attacheront inviolablement à elle, et que soit à la Cour, soit au Parlement, soit dans ma province je tacherai en tout et partout, de meriter le titre de, Sire, de votre Majesté, le très humble, très fidèle et très obéissant serviteur, Bolingbroke."*

Before this offer of allegiance can have reached or been read by George, the bolt fell on its author. Directly after the death of the Queen the Council directed the Hanoverian resident, Kreyenberg, to produce the black box which contained the documents nominating those distinguished persons who, with the great officers of the Crown, formed the Lord Justices of the Regency according to the Act passed in 1705.

The Regents numbered twenty-three in all, sixteen of whom being nominated under the King's own hand; of these the great majority were pronounced Whigs; the Duke of Shrewsbury—who received his office probably because of the services rendered to the Hanoverian succession during the last few days of stormy uncertainty which intervened between the fall of Oxford and the demise of Anne—the Earls of Abingdon, Anglesey and Nottingham being the only Tories. The two former obtained their promotion owing to the moderation of their views, the latter from his pronounced attachment to the Church of England; the new monarch by this means expressing vicariously his affection for the Anglican communion, membership of which the Act of Settlement rendered obligatory on all who ascended the throne of Great Britain.

Marlborough and Sunderland found themselves omitted from the Council, the latter being pale with disappointment when, at the reading of the list, he found no mention of his name; but the Duke proclaimed his disinclination to accept any office in the Government, influenced, perhaps, by the thought that a temporary retirement might benefit materially his interests.

* "Bolingbroke Correspondence," vol. iv., p. 582.

A favourite with the mob, his progress through London resembled a royal procession, the people, so one chronicler declares, greeting him with loud "Hozas" and cries of "Long live King John and Queen Sarah."* Bothmar informs Bernsdorff that the crowd received the exile as "if he had won another battle of Hochstedt."†

Yet the state of affairs hardly pleased him. He could in no way gauge the intentions of George towards himself, and although by the first State document signed by the Elector as British Monarch he obtained once more the post of Captain-General,‡ he resented his exclusion from the Regency and, as his enemies declared, did not "like the thought that there was any person but the King higher than himself in the country." Moreover signs were not wanting to show that his reputation had waned; his triumphal entry into the Metropolis, while his sovereign lay dead and awaiting burial, caused much remark among those who envied and disliked him, the rumour being started that by such behaviour "the Duke desired to show his contempt for his late Mistress."§

Even if Marlborough designed to convey this impression, which is most unlikely, his actions could not have been more neglectful and disrespectful of the late Queen than those of the Lord Justices of the Regency and the Whig financiers, their allies. No prayers were offered for the suffering Monarch, even in her own chapel at St. James, while she lay dying, and what was "more infamous," stocks rose three per cent. in the city.

The subserviency of the Whig Party to the Court of Hanover was absolute, as shown by the attitude of Bothmar, the Ambassador, who at once assumed the direction of affairs, the Whig politicians meekly acquiescing in all his commands. At his direction, some say by his own hand, the sealed packet which Anne always carried about with her was burnt, search also being made for her Will. Too little conscious to be able to sign this document, only a few lines were found, in which the Queen requested that she should be buried by the side of her husband, George of Denmark, at Westminster.

With this command the Lord Justices complied, directing

* "Atholl Papers," p. 66. † Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 640.
‡ Klopp, "Fall of the House of Stuart," vol. xii., p. 654.
§ "Atholl Papers," p. 66.

that the body of the late sovereign should be removed from Kensington at midnight on Sunday, August 22, "in a Herse covered with purple velvet"; but the same Order of Council relates that as the velvet could not be obtained, "the Lord Justices directed said Herse to be covered with purple cloth."*

The Duchess of Somerset acted as chief mourner, the six eldest Duchesses supporting the pall and the fourteen eldest Countesses acting as "assistants to the chief Mourner";† the funeral, however, had to be postponed, the ladies not being able to get their habiliments of woe ready in time.‡

In the meanwhile all went well for the Hanoverian succession. The bulk of the Tories, though evincing no attachment to the person of George, sincerely desired a Protestant monarch and made no attempt by word or deed to prevent the accession of the Elector; the few really devoted to the doctrine of divine right found themselves dumbfounded by the Queen's death; "the thunder had long grumbled in the air, yet when the bolt fell most of our party appeared as much surprised as if they had no reason to expect it."§

The fiery Atterbury might chide the apathy of his colleagues and declare that if they would give him a guard he would don his ecclesiastical robes, lawn sleeves and all, and proclaim King James III. whenever and wherever they should deem necessary, and Keith, Earl Marischal, a gallant member of an ever-gallant family, might offer to lead his troop of Horse Grenadiers for the same purpose. Yet, as events showed, the people at large took but little interest in the matter and never dreamt of resisting the advent of the new German monarch.

On the demise of Anne, the Regents immediately despatched Lord Dorset, as a special envoy, to announce to the King the news of his royal advancement, Godike, the private secretary to Baron von Bothmar, the *de facto* ruler of Great Britain until the arrival of George, being already sent off on the same errand.‖ No less than three missions reached Hanover in the fortnight between July 26 and August 8; Bolingbroke accredited Lord Clarendon

* R.O. George I., Domestic, Bundle I.
† R.O. State Papers, Domestic, George I., Bundle I.
‡ "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 489.
§ Bolingbroke, "Letter to Wyndham," p. 77.
‖ British Museum, State Papers, 4326.

as ambassador to convey to the Electress and her son the reply to their memorial; then, when the recovery of Queen Anne appeared to be impossible, the Privy Council despatched James Craggs, the younger, to prepare the Elector for coming events; finally Lord Dorset, arriving on August 8, completed the trio.

George, according to his custom, supped heavily; on the memorable occasion of his accession to the English throne he spent the evening with Clarendon at La Fantaisie, the villa of Baroness von Kilmansegge, reputed to be his mistress, hypothetically his bastard sister. For some reason, possibly because of his relationship to the defunct Queen Anne, the Hanoverian courtiers disliked Clarendon, even choosing to ridicule his mental capacity, which they declared to be so deficient as to cause him, when Governor of New Jersey and under directions to represent the Queen, to carry out his instructions so much to the extreme letter as to appear on the occasion in feminine costume.

Whatever may be the accuracy of the statement, to Clarendon fell the lot of announcing to the Elector his ascent to the throne of one of the greatest European kingdoms. Returning from La Fantaisie to his place of abode in Hanover, Clarendon received the despatch intimating the death of Anne; at once hurrying to Herrenhausen, arriving at two o'clock in the morning, the agitated envoy found his way to the Orangery and entering George's bedroom, woke him from his postcenal slumbers. Kneeling on the ground, the noble messenger saluted him as King of England,* news which, according to the fawning Whig chronicler, Boyer, George received "with that serenity of countenance and composure of mind peculiar to Heros"; the display of the heroic and majestic qualities of the new Monarch doubtless being enhanced by the circumstance that, at the time, he was attired in the night garb of the period and engaged in sleeping off the effects of a heavy supper.†

Another version of the story, however, gives the precedence to Lord Dorset, who "was the first noble Englishman to greet King George in the English fashion by kneeling to him."‡

* Pollnitz, vol. iii., p. 252; Malortie, vol. i., p. 56.
† Boyer, "Political State," vol. viii., p. 207.
‡ Klopp, vol. xiv., p. 264.

Pending the King's arrival the Council of Regency proceeded with drastic severity to destroy in their opponents all powers of resistance. Acting like a "Council of the Holy Office" they proscribed all Tories or persons savouring of Toryism, Bolingbroke receiving not only severe but even insulting treatment. The Council chose Joseph Addison for their Secretary—a well-deserved promotion, for Addison's pen did brilliant service to the Whig cause—and directed that the despatches addressed to the Secretary of State, without exception, should be delivered to the Council; this, as the bevy of Whig chroniclers, Boyer, Tindal and Oldmixon, relate with obvious satisfaction, gave particular mortification to Lord Bolingbroke, "who was obliged to stand at the door of the Council Chamber and receive orders from those whom a few days before he expected to command."*

All uncertainty concerning the fate of the Tory leader soon departed. No answer to his letter came from George, but a series of mandates arrived, one concerning a patent to the Prince of Wales, a second directing the dismissal of the Secretary, the seizure of his papers and the appointment of Lord Townshend in his place.

Bolingbroke submitted and gave instructions that the documents should be given up, but his under-secretary, Hare, when the office was closed and the clerks dismissed, secreted the principal and important letters, to which act the world is now indebted for four volumes of most characteristic examples of Bolingbroke's epistolary style.

Parliament met the afternoon of the day, Sunday, on which Queen Anne died. The Speaker, Hanmer, being away in the country, Secretary Bromley moved the adjournment of the House until Wednesday; the Whigs, anxious to assert themselves, declared that two days' adjournment at such a crisis would be too long and proposed Monday, the amendment being accepted without a division. At its first sitting Parliament passed addresses couched in language of more than usual obsequious obedience, in this case prompted, probably, by the knowledge that His Majesty's title to the throne lay open to much objection and that the majority of his future subjects were either totally indifferent or distinctly averse to his accession; the

* Tindal, vol. vi., p. 293.

Commons, moreover, made a specific promise of generous supplies, a statement to which may be attributed the warmth of the King's reply.

Alarmed, greatly disconcerted and disunited, the Tory leaders showed signs of complete aberration on the motion for establishing the civil list; with transparent guile they proposed the sum of one million sterling per annum for the King's revenue, three hundred thousand pounds more than had been voted to Anne. It is impossible to discern whether by this conduct they hoped to ingratiate themselves with His Majesty or to embarrass their adversaries, the Whigs, by forcing them to vote against the increase; in either case the design failed and the proposers found themselves hoist with their own petard by a motion to pay the Hanoverian troops in the service of Queen Anne all arrears due to them.

This proposition opened out a distinctly awkward question. At the time of the negotiations for the Treaty of Utrecht, when the Duke of Ormonde received implicit orders to abstain from any military movement which would imperil the proposed overtures for peace, he, by refraining from attacking the French, relieved those forces from such an embarrassing position that Bolingbroke himself acknowledged: "I will not say that the order saved their army, but I think, in my conscience, it did."* Irritated at the inaction, the Hanoverian troops refused to obey orders and, separating from Ormonde, ranged themselves under the command of Prince Eugene. The Ministry consequently refused to pay the defaulters, and notwithstanding the energetic protest of the Elector, wounded in his most susceptible part, his pocket, continued in the refusal. Affairs had changed; now Horace Walpole, the elder, moved that the arrears, to the amount of £65,022 8s. 8d., be paid and also that a sum of £100,000 be offered as a reward for the apprehension of the Pretender.

To neither of these proposals did the Tories dare to make opposition, honest Mr. Shippen openly declaring that, although in the late reign he opposed the payment of the troops, "now he was for it." With regard to the second portion of the resolution none had courage sufficient to raise a voice against it, being obliged to content themselves with Lord Lumley's subtle argument "that the nation

* "Bolingbroke Correspondence," vol. iii., p. 78.

would be put to no expense if the Pretender did not land, and if he did, £100,000 would not do much towards apprehending him."

Matters indeed went badly for the cause of James; Louis of France at once intimated that he intended to abide by the Treaty of Utrecht and informed the Stuart Prince, about to leave Bar-le-Duc and start for Paris, that such a movement could not be permitted and a longer residence in Lorraine would be deemed highly desirable.

Under these circumstances, James perforce contented himself with issuing a manifesto containing a pedigree showing that some fifty-seven persons stood nearer to the legitimate line than George;* the document moreover pointing out in pungent language that "the Elector of Brunswick is one of the remotest relations we have and consequently the remotest Pretender to our throne after us; it is evident that nothing is more opposed to the maxims of England in all respects than that unjust settlement of the succession upon his family. He is a foreigner, a powerful Prince, and absolute in his own country, where he has never met with the least contradiction from his subjects. He is ignorant of the Laws, Manners, Customs and Language, and supported by a good army of his own people besides the assistance which a neighbouring State is obliged to grant upon demand."

If the manifesto had stopped at this point, the obvious truth of every sentence possibly might have impressed some portion of the British nation; unfortunately for his friends, James continued: "Yet contrary to our expectations upon the death of the Princess, our Sister (of whose good intentions towards us we could not for some time past well doubt), and this was the reason we then sat still expecting the good effects thereof, which were unexpectedly prevented by her deplorable death."†

Although rumour long pointed to a design of the late Queen—at the suggestion, probably, of her Ministers—for bringing her brother over to England, this direct statement of the anticipation James entertained proved highly disconcerting to the already much embarrassed Tories and may have hardened the Whigs in the treatment they subsequently meted out to their political opponents.

* "Stuart Papers," vol. i., p. 333; R.O. State Papers.

† R.O. Domestic, George I., Bundle I., No. 37.

CHAPTER VII

GUELPH THE KING

George showed no haste in assuming his new title. For a month he lingered in Hanover reluctant to separate himself from the domestic pleasures of Herrenhausen, displaying, indeed, so much indifference to his new preferment as to induce some contemporary writers to assert that he felt absolute disinclination to accept the throne of Great Britain. Baron von Pollnitz, closely connected by family ties with the Court, and himself living at Hanover, when these events occurred, expresses, however, the opinion, demonstrably correct: "Many people were pleased to say that the Elector hesitated a good while whether or no he should accept of the august dignity which was offered him, but for my part I fancy that the voyage to England was more the subject of the Council's deliberation than the question whether the crown should be accepted."*

That George loved his ease and pleasures, that his only ambition lay in the direction of military glory, and that his nature was in no way receptive of chivalrous motives or lofty ideals, is obvious to all who study the incidents of his life. To imagine for a moment that George I. possessed any exalted views regarding either the supremacy of the Protestant religion or the economic and progressive development of Europe is to credit a mollusc with the aspirations of an eagle; yet some modern writers speak of this King as if he ascended the throne of this country actuated alone by a high sense of duty and contrary to his private desires.

The exact contrary is the case.

He came to England for his own purposes and his own purposes only. The British nation might be a troublesome people to rule, but their riches and power were undeniable; their wealth and weight, especially in the naval forces, would materially assist an Elector of Hanover in the predominant wish of his heart, the aggrandisement of his

* Pollnitz, vol. iii., pp. 252, 253.

German dominions and consequent augmentation of his political importance in the Councils of Germany. These objects undoubtedly influenced George in his acceptance of the British throne and conduced to direct his conduct during his whole sojourn in this country.

Contemporary events supply corroboration of this statement. When Clarendon arrived in Hanover he waited for an audience day after day, owing to the fact that the Elector and the King of Prussia occupied much time with long conferences. Clarendon writes to Bromley on August 15: "From what I can hear I find that the King of Prussia's journey here was to endeavour to engage this Court in the project . . . for dividing the King of Sweden's territory in Germany, but I don't find he has succeeded."*

From early times George and his predecessors cast a covetous eye on those portions of the then Swedish dominions which, abutting on their own territory, cut them off from the sea; it may well be deduced from acknowledged facts that, as Clarendon reports, the question of the Baltic and the other provinces held by Sweden was discussed by these two German powers. The desire of George for the Duchy of Bremen and the Bishopric of Verden proved so engrossing as, in a few years' time, practically to plunge Great Britain into an absolutely unnecessary war; but the hopes of the acquisition existed before his accession, and the possibility of employing the might of these islands for that purpose indubitably enhanced in George's eyes the value of the British Crown and overcame any objections on the score of personal antipathy to the position.

On August 31, 1714, the Elector bade farewell to his Continental dominions, uttering these words to his Court as he departed: "Farewell, dear place, where I have spent so many happy and peaceful hours; I leave you, but not for ever, for I shall hope to see you again frequently";† an aspiration which both he and his son easily found capable of fulfilment.

Travelling leisurely to the Hague, George at length reached the sea; embarking at Orange Polder on board the yacht *Peregrine*, the captain of which, William Sanderson, received the honour of knighthood, the King sailed for England accompanied by an imposing fleet under the

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 42. † Vehse, vol. i., p. 186.

command of the Earl of Berkeley. "There is a squadron ordered out and yachts to attend him and the troops from Flanders are sent for, . . . God direct the people of our Country to behave themselves right and to prevent making it a field of blood and confusion."* So prayed Lord Mar, and his wish found an echo in the hearts of the vast majority of Englishmen who awaited their King, if not with enthusiasm, certainly without hostility, and would have let him reign in perfect peace if he himself had moved but a finger to help in assuaging the national differences which then existed.

The bad effect produced by George's long delay in setting out for his new dominions necessitated some counteracting effort; so Bothmar and his Hanoverian colleagues made preparation for the royal disembarkation at Greenwich, in order that the inhabitants of the Metropolis might have an opportunity of seeing, and the nobility and gentry of the realm of welcoming, the Monarch immediately upon his advent. Great dismay consequently arose when the report arrived that the King, owing to bad weather, would land at Harwich.

The alarm, however, proved false. King George sailed safely to Greenwich, anchoring there on September 18, 1714.

According to the usual custom of those days, a coruscation of poetic effusions heralded the arrival of the sovereign. Frequently such laudatory odes—in the opinion, at least, of subsequent generations—excel more in intention than in execution.

The burst of metrical rhapsody with which John Tickell greeted this auspicious occasion proved no exception to the rule. Commencing with the ejaculation, "Oh, great Brunswick," he proceeds to describe the newcomer as:

> "Mature in wisdom, his extensive mind
> Takes in the blended interests of mankind.
> O'er the vast deep, great Monarch, dart thine eyes,
> A watery prospect bounded by the skies"—

a somewhat enthusiastic view to take of Tilbury and the Essex marshes; the poet, moreover, continuing:

> "Behold the tributes hastening to thy throne,
> And see the wide horizon all thine own"—†

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* Mar and Kellie, Historical MSS., p. 505.
† *Spectator*, No. 620, November 17, 1714.

distinctly an unfortunate flight of fancy, as George arrived in a thick fog, in which condition, politically if not atmospherically, concerning the affairs of his new domains he continued during the whole of his sojourn in the British Isles.

Lord Oxford, remaining in London, uncertain, as usual, which course to pursue, learnt, by the salvo of the Tower guns, that the King had landed at six in the evening. Then and there he determined to hurry to Greenwich to offer, next morning, his allegiance to the new Monarch.

All sorts and conditions of politicians filled the streets of the riverside town, anxious to worship the "rising sun." The royal planet, however, gave but little heat; some particularly well-affected courtiers were received with civility, but to the majority of those present the new King displayed no cordiality whatsoever. Oxford especially he treated with the greatest coldness, Hoffman, the Imperial resident, relating that Lord Dorset individually presented the ex-Treasurer with the words: "Voilà, le Comte d'Oxford, dont votre Majesté aura entendu parler"; whereupon the King gave him his hand to kiss, then with complete contempt, without saying a word, turned his back on him.*

The Duke of Ormonde, Lord Trevor, and the Lord Chancellor Harcourt received intimation that their presence was not desired, although the latter attended and welcomed the King upon his disembarkation; in fact, every portent pointed to the complete disgrace and dismissal of the existing Ministry, and appearances, as events proved, were in no way deceptive.

George, accompanied by his son, entered London on September 20 with all becoming state, and, the weather being propitious, large crowds assembled who greeted their sovereign with respect if with no enthusiasm, although the fact that darkness had fallen before the royal procession entered the Strand may, in part, have accounted for the coldness of the reception.

Once seated on the throne, the King lost no time in displaying his political proclivities. To Bolingbroke already he had shown no mercy, the reputed writer of Anne's insulting letters both to himself and to his mother, and, above all, the author of the Treaty of Utrecht, need expect

* Klopp, vol. xiv., p. 665.

no generous treatment at the hands of the Monarch, who resented the first achievement and detested the second, Every circumstance drew the King closer to the Whigs and identified his accession to the throne with their possession of power.

Yet for some time Oxford trusted that counsels of moderation might prevail and that which Horace Walpole designated "a motley Ministry" might be formed. Whether he hoped that his fervid protestations to the House of Hanover or the actual service he had rendered it by his dilatory policy would induce George to reinstate him in office, it is difficult to surmise.

Two or three reasons may have given him confidence; obviously he talked the matter over with his friends, for he writes to Lord Dartmouth: "I will not take a step but in company with your Lordship, Duke of Ormonde and Lord Treasurer."* Later to the same correspondent he again opens his mind: "It is plain that the following particulars cannot be denied; are, as one may say, self-evident: the King's unacquaintedness and partial information (were he a Solomon) cannot make a plan of a consistent Government or Administration. Neither party of the two demonstrations (Whig or Tory) separately can form any such as practicable. Neither have any amongst them credit enough or perhaps sufficient spirit to form such a settlement." Oxford then expresses an opinion that, necessarily, there must be an understanding between those who wish for an amicable arrangement in England, and he fervently hopes "that my dear Lord's healing hand" will apply the "remedy"; indeed, he almost appears encouraged to believe that matters may turn out favourably for himself.†

George indeed was no Solomon, notwithstanding that he possessed some of the polygamous instincts of that reputedly wise king, but he held a fair portion of common sense and never dreamed, for a single instant, of trusting his fate to a statesman with such an exceptionally unstable record as Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford.

With the exception of the Earl of Nottingham, who, professing Tory principles, always voted Whig, the whole Ministry belonged to the latter party; all who "had dis-

* "Dartmouth Papers," Historical MSS., 11th Report, pp. 320, 321.
† *Ibid.*

tinguished themselves by their professed opposition to the late measures and the peace," is the description given by the Whig historian.

Lord Townshend, holding the office of Secretary of State, theoretically filled the position of First Minister, having as his colleague for the Southern Department, General Stanhope, "a fruitful and luxuriant genius in foreign affairs" who soon arrogated to himself the control of the policy and, being for all practical purposes the ruling spirit of the Government, acted as leader in the House of Commons. Lord Cowper resumed the seals as Lord Chancellor; Lord Wharton, the Dukes of Somerset and Devonshire, occupied high positions in the Royal Household—then posts of importance; and the Duke of Shrewsbury retained the office of Privy Seal. Marlborough received the appointment, so long held by him, of Captain-General of the Forces, but his influence remained but a fraction of its former strength, the King of England never forgiving the great General the slight estimation in which the latter held the military qualifications of the Elector of Hanover.

The Exchequer and the Admiralty were put into commission, Halifax becoming First Lord of the Treasury, "an able speaker and an aspiring Minister, insolent in power, miserable and dejected to the last degree when out of it"; although solaced by a step in the peerage and the bestowal of the Garter, he made no secret of his deep disappointment in not obtaining the long-desired object of his ambition, the white staff of the Treasurer. On none of these Ministers has history conferred a high place; some indeed remain but the shadow of a name, yet the least important post in the Government afforded a new opportunity of employment to Robert Walpole, a statesman who did more than any other in the annals of British history to found a Parliamentary system of government, to debase the standard and to pollute the atmosphere of English public life.

The Paymastership of the Forces, the place allotted to him, though not an important post politically, yet provided Walpole with an opportunity of using his undoubted financial talents, and enabled him also to establish that ascendancy over Townshend which, in after years, exercised such a potent influence in national affairs.

These men, conjoined, formed the *de facto* rulers of England.

The King, fifty-four years of age, dull, phlegmatic, of medium capacity at the best, totally ignorant of the language, idiom and idiosyncrasies of the national life, left to his Ministers entirely the management of that public business which he neither understood, tried to understand, nor was capable of understanding. All the Whig writers, bound as they were to speak in eulogistic terms of the monarch upon whom the Whig supremacy rested, yet exhibited much restraint in their encomiums; although, indeed, Tindal has the temerity to compare George of Hanover favourably with William of Orange, "as the Elector of Hanover was hardly capable of that dissimulation to which King William was accustomed from his birth."*

Yet, putting on one side the tempered praises of the earlier writers and the exaggerated invective of later historians, the fact remains that George, in no light, presents an attractive figure.

Perhaps in the whole history of England no King has been so systematically abused and misrepresented as Charles II., chiefly through the instrumentality of those Whig historians whose sole object lay in attempting to chronicle the exploits and eulogise the performance of the first members of the House of Hanover who ruled this country. Yet although Charles is credited with much of the immorality incident to his reign; though the aims and objects of his foreign policy are completely misunderstood and the advantage the nation derived from it minimised or unrecorded, contemporary writers unconsciously, at times, portray traces of great qualities in the monarch and relate traits of fascinating charm in the man.

Neither the hope of preferment, in such a latitudinarian ecclesiastic as Tindal, nor the patent importunity of a fulsome adventurer such as Toland, can inspire the manufacture of a single pleasing or lofty attribute in either George I. or George II., except the gift of personal courage, which both possessed to a high degree.

A cold, unchivalrous, unrelenting husband; a neglectful, inconsiderate son; a rancorous, brutal father—such is the bare record history gives of the family attributes of

* Tindal, vol. vi., p. 320.

George I. References to these defects, sometimes veiled, sometimes outspoken, appear in the writings of all who have dealings with him and possess the courage, or live in the position, to speak their minds.

Of the relations between George and his wife nothing more need be added; of his behaviour to his mother much has been related by those who knew the treatment the Electress received; and the dislike and jealousy shown by father to son, the unamiable attributes belonging to each, are epitomised in the letter from Schulenberg to Leibnitz written immediately before the time when the death of Anne placed the destinies of Great Britain at the disposal of the two. "I confess the Elector treats his son too harshly in not choosing to gratify him in the slightest of his wishes . . . but on the other hand, the son demeans himself in a way his father has just reason to complain of. He says among other things that he dare not put him into the Council of War, knowing of a certainty that he blabs everything to the women."*

Even the panegyric of the egregious Toland leaves the impression that he finds it no easy task to produce a eulogy on George I. sufficiently favourable, for after the statement that the object of his admiration is a "proper, middle-sized, well-proportioned man of gentile address and good appearance," the chief qualities he enumerates consist of a recapitulation of the Elector's businesslike habits and constant taciturnity: "He's not addicted much to any diversion besides hunting, is reserved and therefore speaks little but judiciously. . . . He's a man of perfect business, exactly regular in the economy of his revenues, reads all his despatches himself at first hand, writes most of his own letters and spends a very considerable part of his time about such occupation in his closet and with his Ministers."† Frightened apparently at the distinctly frigid tone of his own encomium, Toland hastens to add: "I hope therefore that none of our countrymen will be so injudicious as to think this reservedness the effect of sullenness nor pride, nor mistake that for state which really proceeds from modesty, caution and deliberation, for he's very affable to those who accost him and expects that others should speak to him first; which is the best informa-

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 495; Kemble, p. 512. † Toland, p. 70.

tion I could have from all about him and I partly know to be true from experience. And as to what I said of his frugality in laying out the public money, I need not give a more particular Proof than that all the expenses of his Court (as to eating, drinking, fire, candles and the like) are duly paid every Saturday night, the officers of his army receiving their pay every month as likewise his envoys in every part of Europe."* Toland judiciously omits to state that these envoys of the richest minor prince in the North of Europe received most inadequate emoluments, and that Leibnitz, the constant friend and adviser of Sophia, the Elector's mother, could never obtain payment of his arrears of salary from the Electress' son.

It was the custom of the Whig historians, when it served their political purpose, to quote extensively from contemporary writers who reflected disparagingly upon the character of Charles II. and therefore, inferentially, upon that of the House of Stuart. It may serve a more useful, because an historical and not political, purpose to quote from one who lived in the society of George and his son and who, having no special reason for slandering the father, yet handed this picture down to posterity:

" George I. was lazy and inactive even in his pleasures, which therefore were lowly sensual. He was coolly intrepid and indolently benevolent. He was diffident of his own parts, which made him speak little in public and prefer in his own social, which were his favourite hours, the company of wags and buffoons. Even his mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, with whom he passed most of his time and who held all influence over him, was little better than an idiot. Importunity alone could make him act and then only to get rid of it. His views and affections were singly confined to the narrow compass of his electorate. England was too big for him."†

Lord Chesterfield wrote for effect; some of that which he produced may be disregarded; but the picture has life, and in many respects must be taken as accurate; the following paragraph, however, may have owed its origin to the author's constant desire to appear witty: " The King loved pleasure and was not delicate in his choice of it. No woman came amiss to him, if they were very willing

* Toland, p. 71. † Chesterfield, " Characters," vol. ii., p. 432.

and very fat . . . the standard of his Majesty's taste made all those ladies who aspired to his favour and who were near the statutable size strain and swell themselves like the frogs in the fable to rival the bulk and dignity of the ox. Some succeeded and others burst."*

Deliberately ill-natured as may be the above description, it receives corroboration from one who also lived frequently in George's society and, so far as attainable information goes, received no incentive to speak harshly of her monarch: "In private life he would have been called an honest blockhead, and fortune which made him a King only prejudiced his honesty and shortened his days. . . . He was more properly dull than lazy and would have been well content to have remained in his little town of Hanover. . . . He could speak no English and was past the age of learning it. Our customs and laws were all mysteries to him which he neither tried to understand nor was capable of understanding if he endeavoured it."†

The majority of critics who have dilated on the depravity of Charles II. and his times accept implicitly the character of that monarch penned by the Marquis of Halifax and Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, although both of these noble biographers held a strong bias against the Stuart King concerning whom they wrote. It is the fashion now to insinuate that those who inveighed against the first two Georges must have been influenced by personal pique or disappointed ambition. In all cases the element of individual like or dislike should be taken into consideration, but the general consensus of contemporary opinion must be regarded as distinctly unfavourable to the personal and the private character of George, the more so as the intention of the majority of writers to magnify the House of Hanover and to decry the House of Stuart is obvious.

Horace Walpole, the younger, as a child obtained an interview with the King and has left a verbal portrait: "An elderly man, rather pale and exactly like his pictures and coins, not tall, of an aspect rather good than august, with a dark tie wig, a plain coat, waistcoat and breeches of snuff-coloured cloth, stockings of the same colour and a blue riband over all."‡

* Chesterfield, "Mistresses of George I.," vol. ii., p. 439.
† "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Letters," vol. i., p. 111.
‡ Walpole, "Reminiscences," vol. iv., p. 275.

This description, written by Walpole many years after the incident and doubtless coloured by intervening circumstances, nevertheless tallies to a certain extent with that given by Monsieur Saussure, a French gentleman of nomadic habits who, visiting this country in 1725, found many opportunities of seeing the royal family. "The King is about 65 years of age, he is short of stature and very corpulent, his cheeks are pendent and his eyes are too big, he looks kind and amiable, but those who do not like him say that he is not generous in money matters. . . . He is fond of pleasure, especially those of the chase and of the table. His Majesty often invites five or six noblemen to supper and then liberty and gaiety reign supreme. The King is fond of women, he has a mistress. . . . The King is very fond of her, yet he is not always quite faithful to her, amusing himself with passing intrigues now and again."*

With regard to George's love of the pleasures of the table reference is made to this indulgence by almost every writer who enjoyed intimacy with him. Birch, by some thought to be the genuine author of Tindal's history, attributes George's death to overeating and declares that his constitution "promised 100 years, but this was hurt, I have heard, by eating sturgeon and other strong foods in great quantities at the late hours of Supper."†

On these occasions the King objected vehemently to being disturbed, enjoying thoroughly the intercourse of his boon companions. His aforesaid mistress, Ermengarda Melusina von Schulenberg, Duchess of Kendal, tall, lean, ill-favoured—"Look at that mawkin and think of her being my son's mistress!" Sophia once caustically remarked—fearing that her royal lover might fall under more subtle influence than her own, impressed on the German attendants the necessity of cutting as short as possible these dangerous periods; but, with true Teutonic clumsiness, those in waiting frequently discharged their duties in such a tactless manner that His Majesty became offended and applied to his followers "the coarsest epithets in the German language."

The King's household on leaving Hanover consisted of about 100 persons, including Bernsdorff, the Minister on whom he greatly relied and to whose persistence, in a

* "Saussure's Voyages," p. 45. † B.M. Birch MSS., 4326B.

measure, he owed his throne; also his Finance Minister (von Schlitte Gortz), the Minister for War (von Hattorf), von Hardenberg, von Platen, von Kilmansegge, York, and von Schulenberg,* all holding various offices in his Court or household.

Last, though not least, he was accompanied by that secret hand which held so many strings, Jean Robethon, the private secretary, whose correspondence forms the most valuable guide to all the events of this period.

In addition to these, two other important personages attended their sovereign: the Turks, Mustapha and Mahomet, celebrated by Pope, pages of the back-stairs and favourite attendants on their royal master; while several doctors, many servants, cooks, trumpeters, and cellarmen also came over, the tale being completed by one chaplain, one plate-cleaner and one washerwoman.†

The apparent inadequacy of the laundry staff has excited the attention of most modern writers on the Hanoverian advent, even Professor Sir A. W. Ward alluding to the fact, which, however, in reality possesses no historic value, except in so far as it may bear on the strong objection evinced by the first members of the House of Guelph to washing their dirty linen in public, as shown in their systematic habit of destroying all documents which could throw light on the many unsavoury episodes which stain their domestic records.

The household of the first constitutional King of England consisted entirely of Teutons and Turks. George neither spoke nor understood one word of English. Notwithstanding the foolish remarks of Toland—who credits him with learning the tongue and well understanding the constitution of the country‡ he was destined to rule—he came to this land completely ignorant of both its language, its customs and its mode of government.

Previous to the Hanoverian succession British monarchs not only enjoyed many prerogatives and exercised genuine power, but also took a personal share in the deliberations of their Ministries. Charles II. frequently attended the sittings of the House of Lords; standing with his back to the fire he derived, so he himself declared, great amusement

* Vehse, vol. i., pp. 187. 188. † Malortie, vol. i., p. 58.
‡ Toland, pp. 70, 71.

from the proceedings, and, at times, by his pungent remarks swayed the counsels of the assembly; also he constantly, in person, presided over meetings of the Privy Council. Anne in both respects followed this example, although in her case the influence bore far less weight.

But to George to preside over deliberations of which he could not understand one syllable; to listen to discussions on subjects of which, positively, he lived in complete ignorance, was indeed a useless and most unpalatable task. Naturally he turned to his own countrymen, whose words he understood and on whose sagacity he relied. Three German statesmen, long in the service of his house, attended the King to England, by their counsel and intrigues forming a power within a power, the German junto modifying, if not controlling, the decisions of the British Ministry.

The first of these men, Andreas Gottlieb von Bernsdorff, came from the service of Duke William of Celle, whom he served with distinction for many years, into that of George I. of Great Britain, the nephew of his first patron.

To Bernsdorff's persuasive powers the marriage of George with his ill-starred wife may be attributed, but so far from the catastrophe accompanying this union diminishing the influence of the Minister, Bernsdorff seems to have been held in higher estimation after the tragedy even than before. By some he is denounced as the evil genius of the House of Guelph, the Duchess of Orleans assigning to his instigation the hatred existing between George and his son, even declaring that his efforts went so far as to prevent Philip, the Regent of France, from using his good offices to reconcile the King and Prince.*

By the English courtiers surrounding the King, Bernsdorff was heartily disliked, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu alleging that he was "avaricious, artful, designing, and got his influence by bribing the women"; although in reference to the latter charge it may truly be said that in the eighteenth century it became the cardinal axiom of diplomatic procedure: Bribe the woman to secure the man.

Johann Caspar von Bothmar also entered the service of George I., after relinquishing that of the Duke of Celle. As Hanoverian envoy at the Hague Bothmar played his part so well that on more than one occasion, when affairs

* "Duchess of Orleans' Correspondence" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 420.

demanded dexterous management, he went on special missions to England. In the confusion which ensued just before and immediately after the death of Anne, Bothmar assumed complete direction of affairs; he it was who ordered the Queen's private packet of letters to be burnt, and, until the arrival of the King, practically ruled the kingdom, advising that the late Ministry should be dismissed, himself recommending persons for preferment, even to fill the vacant Bishoprics, the Lord Justices meekly consenting in such matters to be treated as ciphers.

While Bernsdorff and Bothmar, both statesmen of experience and sagacity, openly and sometimes flagrantly exercised their power over the Sovereign, Robethon, the private secretary, contented himself with the secret management of affairs. Entering the service of William III. in 1698, this French Huguenot found ample opportunity of studying the political aspect of Europe. On the death of William, Robethon took up his abode at Celle and became the confidant of Bernsdorff, whose friendship, if report speaks truly, he exploited both for his own and employer's benefit: "Even Barnsdorff himself is led by the nose by an ignorant fellow called Robetham, who has nothing to recommend him but his own private interest, Party Rage and Insolence." Kerr of Kersland, the writer of this accusation, himself a not inconsiderable scoundrel, later on complains that in his own quest of a place of profit, the Government of the Bermudas, he finds that he could only succeed "if I made Monsieur Robetham my friend by a present of five hundred guineas because he had such prodigious interest with Barnsdorff."*

Distinct charges of corruption are made against the Secretary by Lady Cowper, Bolingbroke and others, while von Schulenberg, though praising his ability, condemns his strong party feeling and political bias: "Robethon est habile mais ses grandes passions et l'esprit des factions le font quelque fois charrier de travers."†

Yet though deserving, perhaps, the abuse lavished on him, a perusal of the voluminous correspondence collected in the British Museum unmistakably shows the varied ability and knowledge of the man, as well as the control over public matters which he contrived to obtain. When

* Kerr of Kersland, pp. 95, 103. † Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 496.

Bothmar came to England in 1710, vacating his post of ambassador at the Hague, Robethon for a time succeeded him, in that capacity adding to his already large store of political information, for everything that passed in Europe was discussed at the Hague. To Robethon, as to his colleagues, the importance to Hanover of the succession to the English throne became more and more apparent, and, as his letters to Leibnitz and the Raugräfin Louise show, he never ceased exerting himself to stimulate the torpid ambition of George; without his efforts, it has been said, the Elector would never have become King.*

The English people are slow to learn, but the lesson when once absorbed is not soon forgotten.

William of Orange did not scruple to enrich his favourites with heavy grants of Crown lands and ennoble them by the bestowal of many peerages. Nothing conduced more to the unpopularity of that King, the hero of the Revolution, than this distribution of English wealth and honour to his Dutch followers. When, on pressure from William in 1701, Parliament passed the Act of Settlement, in virtue of which George I. became the first elected and nominated ruler of these islands, the irritation at the enrichment and advancement of foreigners found vent in a clause obviously aimed at William himself: "That . . . no persons born out of the Kingdom of England, Scotland and Ireland or the dominions thereunto belonging (although he be naturalised or made a Denizen except such as are born of English Parents) shall be capable to be of the Privy Council or a Member of the House of Parliament or to enjoy any office or place of trust, either civil or military, or to have any grants of lands, tenements or Hereditaments from the Crown to himself or to any other or others in Trust for him."†

Faced by this explicit prohibition the Hanoverians found themselves debarred from the rewards to which they hoped that they had established an earnest claim; in their efforts to evade the provisions of the Act they appear to have excited an almost universal chorus of denunciation at their rapacity and corruption, the Whigs, desirous of the spoils of office for themselves, outcrying even the Tories in their diatribes against exotic venality.

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 504 *et passim*.
† "Statutes of the Realm. W. III."

The words of an historian, a pronounced supporter of the House of Hanover, exactly reflect the contemporary opinion of George's Teuton household: "Coming from a poor Electorate a flight of hungry Hanoverians like so many famished vultures fell with keen eyes and bended talons on the fruitful soil of England."* Strong as is Lord Stanhope's language, Lord Townshend, himself a contemporary, equals it in virulence and surpasses it in personality: "Bothmar, who has every day some infamous project on foot to get money, and his disappointment in these particulars is what he cannot bear, having nothing in his view but raising a vast estate to himself, and therefore will never be satisfied until he has got the Ministry and the Treasury into such hands as will satiate his avarice."†

In times of intense public rivalry, when the dangers of power equalled if they did not exceed the so-called sweets of office, men spoke roughly of their rivals, and possibly Lord Townshend's charges may not be fully deserved, but, if the current evidence is at all to be credited, the German junto showed no high-mindedness and much cupidity.

To the exactions of these men must also be added the requirements of the women.

When George sailed from Orange Polder together with his son and household, he was accompanied by that indispensable appendage to the Electors of Hanover, his mistress, in this case Ermengarda Melusina von Schulenberg. The influence this woman exercised over the King caused her to occupy a place in the annals of the reign totally disproportionate to her mental ability, for although she may not have been that which Lord Chesterfield so bluntly calls her, "an idiot," yet in no way could she be considered as gifted intellectually or possessed of much mental acumen. Like most of her German companions her first object appears to have been to collect money as fast as possible. The post of Master of the Horse being vacant, George, instead of conferring it on some English nobleman of high rank according to the usual custom, handed the emoluments over to Fräulein von Schulenberg, who, stimulated by this first taste of English wealth, proceeded to drive a most lucrative trade in State appointments.

* Stanhope's "History," vol. ii., p. 317.
† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 119.

Of her influence over the King no doubt exists; he is reputed even to have gone through the form of marriage with her, the Archbishop of York being credited with having performed the ceremony.* Count Broglie, the French Ambassador, explicitly states that the King visited her every afternoon from 5 to 8, when she endeavoured to find out his wishes so that she might communicate them to the Ministers, who paid assiduous court to her in the hopes that they might earn her good word with the King, also paying her in more material fashion, as the Civil List demonstrates.

The Ambassador continues to declare that the lady made friendly advances to him; as he thought she might be useful to his master's designs he did his best to ingratiate himself with her, though, as he carefully explains: "I will not trust her farther than is absolutely necessary."† In corroboration of this statement it may be cited that Sir Robert Walpole himself told Lady Cowper that with regard to the Mistress "her interest did everything; she was in effect as much Queen of England as ever any was; that he (the Minister) did everything by her."‡

Scandal spread fast in London in those days, and the rumour of the Schulenberg's rapacity, reputed or real, soon became known in the streets of the Metropolis. Driving in her coach one day the crowd recognised the Duchess; in response to the hoots and groans which greeted her appearance, she put her head out of the window and pleaded in her broken English: "Vy do you abuse us, we only come for your goots!"—"Aye, damn ye," sounded a voice from the crowd, "and for our chattels also."

Current report asserts that George imported a second mistress, the Baroness von Kilmansegge. This lady, the wife of a Court official and the daughter of the Countess von Platen of evil fame, being in a constant state of impecuniosity, found herself unable to attend the King at his departure and consequently, much against her will, remained at Hanover. Raising, by some means, sufficient money for her journey, she contrived to evade her creditors and joined the royal party at the Hague. All contemporary

* B.M. Birch MSS., Addison MSS., 4326B.
† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 301.
‡ "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 132.

and some modern historians declare this lady to have been George's mistress; it is possible that they are mistaken, and that she was the illegitimate daughter of his father, Ernest Augustus, by the Countess von Platen, his depraved and vicious paramour. Carlyle states this hypothesis in his life of Frederick the Great, and Professor Ward treats it as an established fact; the German writer, Vehse, however, apparently contemplates both contingencies.* George incontestably took deep interest in Madame von Kilmansegge and allowed her to exercise great influence in his Court, from which, in common with her other German associates, she made much pecuniary profit. In 1722 the King created her Countess of Darlington and directed the Chancellor of the Exchequer to defray the cost of the patent, £648 10s., from the British Treasury.†

Early in October the Electoral Princess, Caroline, soon to become Princess of Wales, joined the royal party accompanied by her two young daughters, Anne and Amelia, the youngest of the family, Caroline, being left in Hanover.‡ Prince Frederick, eldest son of George Augustus, and consequently heir presumptive to the Crown of Great Britain, also remained in Germany by the express command of the King, who retained complete control over the person and education of the boy, depriving the father of all paternal rights and exhibiting in that, as in his whole treatment of his eldest son, a rancorous hatred which gave some colour to the suspicion, sedulously fostered by the Duchess of Orleans, that George I. doubted the legitimacy of his heir.

Seven days after the arrival of the Princess, the royal family being thus complete, the Coronation took place, hitherto delayed until the ceremonial could be satisfactorily arranged, for "he (the King) is very stately and everything must be very fine." In reality George hated ceremony and objected to the restraints of regal etiquette, yet, at the same time, strongly resented any omission of the customary observances of the German Court, creating thereby an unfavourable comparison with his Stuart predecessors, who exhibited the lazy dignity of a kingly race rather than the stiff pretensions of a minor Prince.

* Vehse, vol. i., p. 165. † Treasury Calendars, 1714–1719.
‡ Tindal, vol. vi., p. 309.

Yet to some enthusiastic admirers, members of the Whig Party, George presented a picture almost of perfection: "All hear are in great raptures of the King and say he is the Wysest and the Richis Prince in Yoarup," writes Lady Wentworth, then adds with true wisdom: "I hope he will prove soe."*

Other feminine admirers thought the same, Lady Cowper at the Coronation "never before being so affected with joy in her life"; "it brought the tears into my eyes and I hope I shall never forget the Blessing of seeing our holy Religion thus preserved as well as our Liberties and Properties."†

The sense of exalted gratitude, however, did not blind the devout diarist to the defects of her female friends who also participated in the ceremony; Lady Nottingham, having recited the Litany somewhat loudly, meets with the well-merited rebuke: "Everybody stared at her, and I could read in their countenances that they thought she overdid her High Church Part."

The Archbishop, Tenison, performed the ceremony, seventeen archbishops and bishops, including Atterbury, being present, while a great many peers attended to yield allegiance to the King. Bolingbroke, denied admission to the Court, advanced to pay his homage; "the King, seeing a face he did not know, asked his name . . . and he (Lord B.), hearing it, as he went down the steps from the throne, turned round and bowed three times down to the very ground."

Loyalty and enthusiasm reigned everywhere; the Tory Lords did homage to the new monarch with the greatest unanimity, although perhaps Lady Dorchester's remark may, to a certain extent, have supplied the reason, for when the Archbishop walked round the throne demanding the consent of the people, the fair peeress bluntly ejaculated: "Does the old fool think that anybody here will say No to his question when there are so many drawn swords ?"‡

Throughout the country but little opposition appeared; there was rioting at Bristol, Glasgow and elsewhere, and the University of Oxford took the opportunity, on the

* "Wentworth Papers," p. 417.
† "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 5.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Coronation Day itself, to confer the honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law on Sir Constantine Phipps, late Lord Chancellor of Ireland, thus designedly doing honour to one whom George had dismissed from his post shortly before. Otherwise the nation regarded the accession of the House of Hanover with complete tranquillity, and if it displayed but little enthusiasm for the new King, it certainly developed no distinct antagonism to him; to quote Bolingbroke's words: "His Majesty ascended the throne with as little contradiction and as little trouble as ever a son succeeded a father in the possession of a private patrimony."*

* Bolingbroke's "Letter to Wyndham," p. 88.

CHAPTER VIII

GUELPH AND THE TORIES

The reign of George I. presents a period, for the first time in English history, in which the authority of the Sovereign became of secondary importance compared with the political activities of his Ministers.

It is true that the favour of the King still formed an appreciable factor in the career of those who aspired to the honours of public life or the power and emoluments of a place in the Government, but on the chief Minister and his colleagues, not on the Monarch, now lay the responsibility for the national policy, and they, while looking to the King for rank and rewards, rested their hopes of support and continuance in power on Parliament, and to a great extent on Parliament alone.

Before the Act of Settlement the administration of affairs lay in the hands of the Privy Council, over which the Monarch presided and which owed its existence solely to the volition of the Sovereign, who called to its deliberations all or any he or she might please, regardless alike of their party connection or political bias. But with the advent of the House of Hanover a complete change occurred in the methods of the government of this country.

George owed his elevation to the throne simply to the fact that he chose to call himself a Protestant and happened to have a father who professed Lutheranism and a mother who, educated a Calvinist, held latitudinarian opinions which permitted her to educate her children in any creed which might benefit their temporal fortunes.

Whether or no a reluctance to ascend the throne of Great Britain, as has been stated, ever actually existed in the breast of George may well be doubted; but there is evidence, corroborative of the statement frequently made, that he determined to put himself entirely in the hands of his Ministers and be governed by them. "Then," he is reported to have said, "they become completely responsible for everything I do."

It is difficult to see how he could have arrived at any other decision.

The great Officers of State, in Council assembled, administered the affairs of the realm. The Monarch, if he or she chose, attended their deliberations and influenced their decisions. But to preside over a solemn conclave conducted in an unknown tongue, whose proceedings were entirely concerned with matters equally obscure and incomprehensible was indeed a weariness of the flesh, and George, who always took some thought for his own personal comfort, whether physical or mental, soon relinquished a position which contained so few advantages.

Deprived of the presence of the Monarch, the Council necessarily fell under the influence of the individual statesman who, by social position or intellectual acquirements, obtained ascendancy over his colleagues; hence evolved the position of the Prime Minister and also by a logical progression the system of Cabinet meetings, the owner of the ruling mind associating with himself such trusted colleagues as he might desire, who, deliberating in secret, then, jointly and severally, became responsible for the action of the Government.

This procedure, beginning tentatively in the reign of George I., gradually became part and parcel of the constitution, the mediocrity in essential qualities of the statesmen of the early decades of the Hanoverian dynasty, together with the abstention of the Sovereign from all overt acts of interference with domestic legislation, combining—particularly in the reign of the second George—to render the position of the chief Minister, Walpole, absolutely assured, his skill in finance and mastery over the House of Commons leaving him without a rival to contest his supremacy.

But at the time of the advent of George I. no statesman possessed such acknowledged superiority over his colleagues as to merit the title of Prime Minister, the linguistic deficiencies of those connected with the Government of the country placing all more or less on the same plane, producing moreover some curious complications.

As the King knew no English and the Ministers no German, he directed them to converse with him in French, which few of them spoke well, and to conduct all their

correspondence in the same language in order that he, the Sovereign, might obtain at least a modicum of information concerning the affairs of his realm.

Walpole, however, possessed no acquaintance with any language except his own, and therefore carried on his intercourse with George by means of such Latin phrases as an incomplete acquaintance with that tongue supplied; as he himself once observed, he controlled the King "by bad Latin and good punch," for which beverage the occupant of the throne quickly acquired a pronounced inclination.

It savours more of the ridiculous than the sublime to find one English statesman writing to another in bad French, not, as might be conjectured, for the purpose of removing their own insular ignorance of a useful and interesting language, but because their master, His Britannic Majesty, was unable to utter or understand a single syllable of the native idiom of his people, thus rendering it incumbent on his Ministers to find some common medium in which they could acquaint their Sovereign with a smattering of intelligence concerning his kingdom. In regard to actual intercourse, also, it must have been a sight not entirely conducive to reverence to see a corpulent Minister kneeling before an equally corpulent King, the whole conversation between the two on the affairs of State being carried on by scraps of dog Latin.

The Comte de Broglie, ambassador for Louis XV. to the Court of St. James, in his despatches to his master gives a graphic description of the procedure in the royal household, and although, possibly, it may be somewhat biassed, much of it bears the impress of truth: "The King has no predilection for the English nation and never receives in private any English of either sex, none even of his principal officers are invited to his chamber in the morning to dress him nor in the evening to undress him. These offices are performed by the Turks who are his *valets de chambre*, and who give him everything he wants in private. He rather considers England as a temporary possession to be made the most of while it lasts than as a perpetual inheritance for himself and his family."*

This aloofness, caused, doubtless, by complete ignorance of all matters appertaining to the predilections of the British

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 301.

people, permeated the whole of George's actions; his hatred of ceremony led him to curtail as much as possible those State pageants which, from all time, have interested and favourably impressed the masses of the population; his callous and self-controlled nature constrained him, even in his public appearances, to keep himself as much as possible from contact with all but his most intimate surroundings.

His love of music, the one art for which he showed any appreciation, took him frequently to the opera; even there, in the seclusion of the royal box, he carried his liking for isolation to excess, and instead of presenting himself to the audience, as was the wont of his predecessors, occupied the back seats, on one occasion between the two Turks and Nicolini the singer;* at other times placing his mistresses in front while he remained behind in obscurity.

On the rare occasions of a ceremonial drawing-room, unless the fervid imagination of the French chronicler may have coloured the picture too highly, George appears to have thawed occasionally, for when three ladies were presented "the King kissed them all affectionately on the lips, and I remarked that he seemed to take most pleasure in kissing the prettiest of the three."† Apparently the debutantes did not share the enjoyment of the royal caresses, for "some ladies, who have travelled in foreign countries, now offer their cheeks instead of their lips."

Possessing no sympathy with British idiosyncrasies or insight into English nature, deprived of free intercourse with his Ministers by mutual incompatibility of language, George, while interfering but little in the domestic policy of the Government, himself not unjustifiably turned for counsel and conversation to those male and female companions who came with him from their native land. To them the royal favour took the acceptable form of permission to vend British honours and offices, the products of the sale supplying, in part, the absence of those grants of Crown lands which the Hanoverians anticipated but from which they were debarred by the precautions of Whig statesmen, taught by the experiences provided by William of Orange.

To console themselves for this disappointment, German

* "Stuart Papers," vol. i., p. 141. † Saussure, p. 43.

mistresses, courtiers and even the Turkish valets invariably sold their influence to the highest bidder, Ermengarda Melusina von Schulenberg, created in 1719 Duchess of Kendal, being the chief offender; "the whole tribe most impudently and notoriously by their Brokers took money for all sorts of places, so did Bernsdorff, Bothmar and Robethon; the embroils thus occasioned are well remembered." The King "seemed not to have been very skilful in the choice of favourites, or very unlucky, for both the Hes and the Shes were bitter bad."* Popular opinion confirms this contemporary testimony, the delinquencies, political, moral and pecuniary, of George's male and female dependants exciting the deepest irritation and dissatisfaction in the minds of his British subjects of all classes.

But, notwithstanding the flagrant and objectionable sins of his German attendants, to the Whig advisers of this Constitutional King must be attributed that worst and most unpatriotic error which left its mark upon the whole reign of the first Monarch of the House of Guelph, the division of the kingdom into two irreconcilable schools of political thought by the proscription of all who professed Tory doctrines.

It must be conceded that on the death of Anne the Whigs found themselves confronted with a difficult and serious situation. The bulk of the nation favoured, actively or passively, the cause of the exiled Stuarts, and the leading Tory statesmen were men of sufficient energy and enterprise to have led, if they had so designed, a great popular movement against the Protestant Succession.

But the very magnitude of the danger, hypothetical or otherwise, while it may provide the reason for the action of the Whigs, in no way extenuates their conduct, but rather emphasises their fault.

Precedents existed which well might have guided them; some at least of their leaders had participated previously in a crisis bearing much the same character. Both the Restoration and the Revolution had been brought about by Coalitions; these changes, which in Continental Europe would have drowned a nation in blood and left a legacy of undying hate between the victors and the vanquished, in this country came into operation peacefully and smoothly

* B.M. Addison MSS., 4326B.

because the wisdom of English statesmen recognised the essential value of effecting such drastic alterations in government by means of a coalition of opinion rather than by the domination of a faction.

Such an example well might have been followed by the Whig leaders upon the advent of the House of Hanover.

For a long time before the actual accession a strong section of Members of Parliament, led by Hanmer—a man of weight and consideration—openly and strenuously advocated the principle of the Hanoverian succession, though in other matters professing attachment and according support to the Tory policy; yet the moment the accession of George became an established fact, instead of practising toleration towards those who upheld the last Ministry, the Whigs commenced a course of violent attack against their former opponents both with regard to their persons and their principles.

Such conduct was not the outcome of some sudden ebullition of political animosity, it formed part and parcel of a deliberate course of action pursued by a portion of the Whigs for their own ends: "to prevent by any means the possibility of a good understanding between the House of Hanover and any party opposed to themselves."*

The moderate members of the Whig Party, few in number but of high position, disapproved of the proposed crusade; Lord Somers, when informed of the intended attack, burst into tears and deprecated any such conduct as worthy only of a Roman Triumvirate. But the fiery spirits carried their own purpose, and to Stanhope, Townshend, Sunderland and Walpole, together with the remaining Whig leaders of that period, must always attach the lasting disgrace that, for their own ambitious ends, they ran the risk of plunging the country into a civil war.

Moreover it should be remembered that, in pursuing this policy, they acted in despite of the opinions of the King, as originally held by him before he fell under the baneful influence of his embittered English advisers.

Bolingbroke asserts, and there is no valid reason for doubting his veracity, that many of those active in the

* Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 498.

Tory ranks had been " made to entertain some faint hopes that they would be permitted to live in quiet. I have been assured the King left Hanover in that resolution."*

All evidence points to this moderation on the part of George. This cold self-concentration in no way diminished the dispassionate common sense which usually controlled his actions, and assuredly neither he nor his older German advisers ever advocated strong antagonism to the Tory Party. On the contrary, expressions are constantly used by all acquainted with the true state of public feeling in this country embodying the opinions of Steinghens, that it was " an illusion to believe that the Whigs alone could bring in the House of Hanover "; as Leibnitz wisely expressed: " they would do very wrong to attach themselves only to the Whigs, they ought to attach themselves to the bulk of the nation and endeavour to abolish these factions."†

Exclusion from office most of the Tories, with the exception of Oxford, anticipated: " I could expect no quarter from the Whigs, for I deserved none," wrote Bolingbroke; but the drastic treatment meted out by the Government to all who differed from them became, by its very severity, unjust, unpatriotic and most detrimental to the national interests.

On January 5, 1715, the King dissolved Parliament, the first act of the new Constitutional Monarch being accompanied by a positive contravention of the essence of the Constitution, for, obviously by the advice of his Ministers, he issued a proclamation directly intended to influence the elections to the Commons House by intimating to the people the manner in which the King wished them to vote, and thus, inferentially, threatening them with the royal displeasure if they refrained from acting according to his desires. The natural result followed, scenes of great violence and intimidation, voters coming from the poll being attacked without having offered the least provocation, and injuries so serious inflicted that some of the sufferers died from the severity of their wounds.‡

This action, nevertheless, ensured a large majority to

* " Letter to Wyndham," p. 79.
† Leibnitz, vol. iii., p. 473; Kemble, p. 493.
‡ " Dartmouth Papers," Historical MSS., 2nd Report, p. 321.

the Whigs, whose power thus became consolidated by the support of Parliament.

It is odd to find a writer of the logical acumen and chill, dispassionate style of Lord Morley remarking that elections, such as that which occurred in the first twelve months of the reign of George I., voiced the opinions of the people and confirmed by popular mandate the measures submitted to the electorate.

The public voice had little to do with elections in those days; money, influence and intimidation were the chief ingredients in a so-called appeal to the people.

The constituencies, consisting of but few voters, put themselves up for sale; in the counties the great families who owned the land compelled the tenants to vote as directed by the landowner, who obtained his price from the Minister; in the borough, the small and venal corporation openly sold itself to the highest bidder.

For absolute corruption the Cornish boroughs were most notorious. Lord Radnor, with great glee, relates concerning this election: "30 honest members, at least, will be returned for this county," then he unblushingly boasts of the methods by which he obtained the result: "I expect 400 people to dinner, I had that number last time and there did not goe home five sober of the whole number."*

The Member bought the constituency, the Minister bought the Member and then exacted his own price from the Crown, which, in the case of the first two Georges, recouped itself from the Civil List. The nation paid for all; that was the function of the people under the rule of its self-named friends, the Whigs, as it has been in later times under those parties upon whom the Whiggish mantle has fallen and who utter the same shibboleths and practise the same frauds.

Yet even with the manifest abuses, notwithstanding the open pressure of interested persons, public opinion did exercise a subtle influence over the composition of Parliament.

Self-interest is ever sensitive.

The Member of Parliament in the reign of George I. and his son, steeped, as many of them might be, in political

* Treasury Calendars, 1714–1719, p. 39.

corruption, yet could not remain altogether indifferent to the emotions which stirred the country and so reflected, it may be dimly but yet in an appreciable degree, the sentiments which existed in the majority of the population.

And that majority, after the peaceful accession of George I., in no way actively favoured Jacobitism. The bulk of the people, though attached, in many cases fervently, to the Church of England, did not regard George as an adversary to that Church, while on the other hand they feared and disliked Roman Catholicism, which James Stuart professed. The weight of debt also pressed down the commercial classes, and the majority of the nation, though entertaining no affection and expressing but little allegiance to the House of Hanover, desired rest and quietness and thus tolerated the Whigs and the Succession.

In a Parliament pronouncedly antagonistic to the cause of the Stuarts it is interesting to find no less than five dukes whose appellations bear distinct testimony to the fact that they—through the instrumentality of Charles II. it may be presumed—owned a strong admixture of Stuart blood: Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Cleveland; Charles Lennox, Duke of Richmond; Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton; George Fitzroy, Duke of Northumberland; Charles Beauclerk, Duke of St. Albans.

Once firmly seated in power the Government lost no time in smiting its old opponents hip and thigh. Indication of this policy showed in the resolutions passed by certain constituencies wherein Whig influences largely prevailed; the city of London—at that time always opposed to Toryism—drew up instructions to its representatives commanding them to insist on an enquiry into the late peace; other places followed the example of the Metropolis, thus affording ample warning to the Tories of the coming storm.

The latter made some faint efforts to organise resistance; the Duke of Ormonde, a popular favourite, called together his following in the House of Lords, especially the younger members of the party; but their ranks were broken, their courage fled and, unhappily, mistrust of each other separated the leaders and paralysed their councils.*

George opened Parliament in person, the speech from the

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 508.

throne, a solemn farce, being read by the Chancellor; a wise proceeding, as otherwise the faithful Commons would have found it a very difficult matter to comprehend the royal intentions.

In the speech, probably compiled by Lord Cowper, the Chancellor, the King expressed his thanks to Almighty God that He, in His good Providence, had called him, George, "to the throne of his ancestors," thus claiming his crown by hereditary descent, a direct negation of his real right derived entirely from the action of Parliament; to which Legislature, as a Constitutional King, he owed his accession both "*de facto* and *de jure*."

The customary observances being duly made, the Commons, at the first sitting, on Thursday, March 17, 1715, elected, in lieu of the weighty Hanmer, Spencer Compton as Speaker, "a plodding, heavy man with great application but no talents, always more concerned with the manner and form in which a thing should be done than about the propriety or expedience of the thing itself."*

Then began the long-desired crusade against the Tory Leaders. Preliminary steps had already been taken. The ambassador to the Hague, Lord Strafford, who having acted as plenipotentiary at Utrecht became a special object of detestation and attack, received a peremptory notice to appear before the Privy Council and deliver to the authorities all his letters and documents.

Strafford, a haughty man, notorious for his roughness of demeanour and "excess of bloated pride," after some demur assented and yielded up his papers, clearly discerning that the whole Council showed pronounced antagonism to him personally, King George himself intervening to his disfavour with an unfriendly remark.

To Bolingbroke, Oxford and Ormonde these proceedings gave a sinister warning; if the instrument received such treatment, the principals might expect even more drastic measures.

Nature unfitted Bolingbroke for a crisis where the trend of events required exceptional coolness and imperturbability. He once remarked: "The greatest Hero is nothing under a certain state of nerves"; for himself at no period did he possess the fibre of steel required by the brutal and tem-

* "Harvey Memoirs," p. 31.

pestuous times in which he lived. His nickname "Mercurialis" portrays exactly his characteristics, and on one occasion, at least, a record can be found of how, at a critical moment, he lost command of himself. On the day when the wretched spy, Guiscard, made the murderous attack on Harley, Bolingbroke, after driving his weapon through the arm of the assailant, rushed out of the Council Chamber calling loudly for a surgeon, then "without a sword in the utmost confusion ran away to St. James,"* obviously bereft of mental control.

To his high-strung nature every step taken by the Whig Government portended menace and disaster. He disliked and mistrusted his former colleague, Oxford, and feared that among the papers of the late Queen Anne would be found letters of the ex-Lord Treasurer reflecting on the conduct of other members of the Ministry and accusing Lord Harcourt and himself, Bolingbroke, of Jacobitism.†

The address of the Lords in reply to the speech from the throne, while assuring the King of their zeal and allegiance, expressed a desire to take such measures as might ease the National Debt, restore Credit and Trade and "recover the reputation of this Kingdom in Foreign parts." To this direct reflection upon the continental policy of the Ministry to which he belonged, Bolingbroke replied with fervour, characterising the words "recover the reputation" as a direct insult to the memory of the late Queen Anne, whom he loyally served and by whom the policy attacked was warmly approved; then he ended the last speech his eloquent tongue uttered in the British Parliament, by moving a resolution substituting for the obnoxious sentence the words "maintain the reputation of the Kingdom."

But the Lords as well as the Commons worshipped the rising sun; the former Tory majority melted away and the address in its original form passed by a "great Plurality."

In the Commons the threat took a more direct shape: "It shall be your business to trace out these measures . . . and bring the authors of them to condign punishment," declared Walpole, while Stanhope, speaking of "a Secretary and a certain English general," indicated unmistakably both Bolingbroke himself and the Duke of Ormonde.‡

* "Portland Papers," vol. iv., p. 670. † *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 508.
‡ "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 44 *et passim.*

In the same speech the Whig leader declared that, although attempts had been made to destroy all documents, yet sufficient evidence remained to prove the late Ministry the "most corrupt that ever sate at the helm"; if his prescient foresight could have carried him forward a few years he would have been able to see a Ministry, under his own then most powerful colleague, which reduced the corruption of Parliament to such a fine art that its evil reputation has lasted through the space of centuries.

To render the situation more serious, Prior, the envoy at Paris during the negotiations for the detested peace, received orders to give up all papers to his successor, the Earl of Stair, a pronounced Whig partisan, and forthwith to return home. On his arrival in London, on March 25, 1715, he received an invitation from Lord Townshend to dine in company with Stanhope and other Ministers, afterwards being examined before a committee of the Privy Council and remanded in custody of a messenger.

The arrest of his confidential correspondent came as the culminating point to Bolingbroke's fears; he believed that a plot existed, as he afterwards told Lord Lansdowne, "to pursue me to the scaffold, my blood was to be the cement of a new alliance."*

On the night of March 25 he appeared at the playhouse, bespoke a fresh comedy for Drury Lane and subscribed to a new Opera, then, retiring before the performance ended, disguising himself in a black wig and a long horseman's coat, he shouldered a pair of saddle-bags, in the character of a servant to de la Vigne, one of the messengers of the French Embassy, and rode off to Dover, where he found a vessel provided for him which, the same night, carried him to Calais, whence he soon transferred himself to Paris.

With their appetites for revenge whetted by the discomfiture and flight of their arch-enemy the Ministers lost no time in initiating proceedings against him.

Acting on the report of a secret committee, which contained such an undue proportion of Whigs as to denude it of even a bare semblance of judicial impartiality,† Walpole impeached Bolingbroke for high treason.

Lord Coningsby—"that hangman Coningsby," as Harley

* Boyer, "Political State," vol. ix., p. 230.
† "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 57.

designated him—followed with a second indictment and, in performing his allotted task, thought fit to indulge in a rhetorical flourish which was deemed of sufficient importance to be recorded in various current publications: "The worthy Chairman has impeached the hand but I impeach the head; he has impeached the clerk but I the justice; he has impeached the scholar but I the master; I impeach Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer, of high treason and other high crimes and misdemeanours."*

It was well for Bolingbroke that he did not hear this tirade, for surely amid all the distress of his own attainder, an added bitterness would have afflicted him at being described as the scholar of Oxford's mastership, as the mere machine for registering the designs of Harley's intellect. "I abhorred Oxford to that degree that I could not bear to be joined to him in any case," he wrote to Wyndham, and it cannot be doubted that this deep-seated dislike, tinged with much distrust, partly drove Bolingbroke to the rash step which brought his Parliamentary career to an abrupt close.

Yet, though most desirous of taking further steps against their abhorred opponents, the Government, at heart, feared the effect of an attack upon their next destined victim, the Duke of Ormonde, whose popularity with the mob was quite exceptional; his generosity, magnificence of appearance and splendour of living gaining him a host of adherents among the citizens of London; the Duke, according to the evidence of the Whig historian, "plainly countenancing these outbursts" of political excitement and showing some satisfaction in being "the idol of the rabble."†

To leave such a prominent Tory unassailed would have been interpreted among the Whig rank and file as distinct evidence of weakness in their leaders; so, on June 21, Mr. Secretary Stanhope impeached the Duke of treason, and Mr. Aislabie performed the same task regarding the Earl of Strafford, in the latter case, however, merely alleging high crimes and misdemeanours, omitting the more serious capital charge of treason.

The record of the proceedings in both Houses of Parliament amply demonstrate that Walpole and Stanhope at

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 67. † Boyer, vol. ix., p. 333.

this time virtually led the Whig Party. One by one the great names of the Revolution dropped out of the country's history: Marlborough, a "candle in the socket," Somers, fast outliving his reputation and his intellect, appear no more as powers in the State, while Burnet and Halifax, the Whig Bishop and the Whig financier *par excellence*, also the Marquis of Wharton, all died in the first six months of 1715.

Wharton's death at this period of Whig ascendancy came as a distinct loss to his associates; "an atheist grafted on a Presbyterian," he possessed all the qualities necessary for a most efficient and competent Whip of a corrupt and self-seeking party. Of notorious immorality in his private life, he seemed by intuition to understand the natures and anticipate the desires of those Members of Parliament upon whose support the Ministry depended, and by his knowledge of human nature, as he conceived it, rendered valuable services to his colleagues in times of great uncertainty of opinion.

Walpole, intent then as always on acquiring influence and power; Stanhope, violent, impetuous, and deeply inflamed against the Tories, believed that the opportunity of smiting their opponents should not be lost and that, if struck quickly, the Tory Party might be destroyed. As events proved they were right, but the manner in which they chose to achieve their objects nearly caused the ruin of their country. Public opinion, tolerant, if not enthusiastically in favour, of the Hanoverian succession, now openly began to declare itself against a king who possessed no regal qualities or appearance, and a Ministry patently seeking to override all who did not yield it slavish obedience. So pronounced became the popular disaffection that the Prussian resident, Bonet, writes in June, 1715, that the Jacobite cause had made more progress in eight months of King George's reign than in the whole four years of the late Tory Ministry.*

Riots arose in many parts of the country, notably in London, where, on the anniversary of the Restoration of Charles II., disloyal mobs burned the effigies of several persons "most dear to all true Protestants," particularly those of Luther and Calvin, a not particularly subtle reflection on the religion of their German monarch. In

* Michael, p. 486.

Bristol, Oxford, Manchester and elsewhere signs of disloyalty arose, the watch-cry of the populace always being, "High Church and Ormonde!" the latter nobleman becoming so much the object of the mob's adoration since his impeachment that, in London, it was found necessary to send a picket to reinforce the household guards threatened by the riotous crowds.

Evidently the Whigs hoped that Oxford and Ormonde would follow the example of Bolingbroke and flee the country before the threatened consequences of an indictment for high treason.*

But they misconstrued the disposition of the ex-Treasurer.

No action in his life was so indicative of his character as the manner in which he met these accusations. Instead of hastily taking refuge in a foreign land, Oxford calmly communicated with his legal adviser, and, while waiting with perfect equanimity the action of his political opponents, endeavoured to find precedents and judgments which might serve as a defence for his past conduct.†

On the motion that the Earl of Oxford be committed to safe custody the Government carried their point by fifty votes against thirty, six only of the Bishops voting in favour of the accused.

Never in his life did Oxford become so popular as during this period of his arraignment and committal; his friends increased by "whole parishes"; at Bow Church a portion of the 95th Psalm, beginning at the 20th verse, was sung, which, as the writer of the narrative observes, "is worth your looking up,"‡ evidently laying stress on the words therein to be found: "They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood"; probably also regarding with pious equanimity the sequel: "He shall recompense them in their wickedness and destroy them in their malice, yea, the Lord our God shall destroy them." Not only was this service performed at other churches, but adherents to the fallen statesman preached sermons in his favour, while the mob, with characteristic incongruity, for Oxford came of Presbyterian stock, added his name to their war-cry: "High Church, Ormonde and Oxford for ever!"§

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 510. † *Ibid.*, p. 511.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 514. § Boyer, "Political State," vol. x., p. 47.

So serious did the prospect of rioting become that the Black Rod persuaded his prisoner to avoid the direct route to the Tower and go by way of Smithfield privately, though when his coach appeared, issuing from the courtyard of his house in St. James's, such a throng of people clustered round it and the acclamations grew with such intensity that these "so terrified K(ing) G(eorge) that he left his supper in great confusion to inquire the cause of the tumult."*

While Oxford patiently, if not apathetically, awaited the assaults of his enemies, his former colleague definitely committed himself to the Jacobite cause.

For a time Bolingbroke hesitated, visiting both Lord Stair, the British Ambassador, and also the Duc de Berwick; but, upon reports arriving from England of the growing unpopularity of the new royal family, the receipt of an autograph letter of invitation from James Stuart proved too strong an inducement for one in his forlorn condition, and the most brilliant statesman of the early part of the eighteenth century, for the time being unconditionally linked his fortunes to those of the Stuart Prince.

Immediately on his arrival at the Jacobite Court at Commercy disillusionment began.

After the first interview he commenced, if not to repent of his own rashness, at least to be fully convinced of it. No order, no fixed designs, worst of all, no reticence existed in that curious Court of disaffected odds and ends. Every soldier thought himself a general, every plotter believed himself a statesman; everybody discussed everything, the ladies, virtuous and otherwise, even more sedulously than the men, debating the value of each proposed move whether naval, military, or political. "I found a multitude of people at work and everyone doing what seemed good in his own eyes; no subordination, no order, no concert; care and hope sat on every busy Irish face; those who could write and read had letters to show and those who had not arrived at this pitch of erudition had their own secrets to whisper."† Such was his despairing description of the strange throng among whom he found himself; small wonder that he viewed the future with grave mistrust.

* Boyer, "Political State," vol. x., p. 50.
† "Letter to Wyndham," pp. 123, 124.

Yet, above all, the greatest difficulty with which he and the Jacobite cause contended lay in the character of the Prince for whose interests it existed. A typical Stuart, James Francis Edward possessed all the failings of his race without, however, showing in a sufficient degree the counteracting virtues which the critical times demanded.

Tall, straight and slender, large-boned but clean-limbed, like his uncle, Charles II., the Chevalier de St. George walked much and walked fast. As troubles and anxieties increased, the lines of his face deepened until they resembled more and more those of the restored monarch whose lot his nephew hoped to emulate. In some few other attributes the likeness continued, for James Francis Edward, like Charles, walked for health, and, though frequently hunting and shooting, used these diversions for that same purpose rather than from any keen devotion to sport.

His manners were excellent, Lord Mar declaring "he never knew a finer gentleman"; and the Rev. Mr. Leslie, who acted as chaplain to such portion of James's household as professed the tenets of the Church of England, speaks of the affability, the good sense and sweetness of temper of his princely patron, adding that he has "something strangely engaging in his voice and deportment." In these particulars the similarity between uncle and nephew is striking, but here the likeness ceased. James showed great application to business, spent much time in his closet and wrote much, which no man did "better or more succinctly"; yet though in this differing from Charles II., the most careless of monarchs, he lacked all that tact, keen insight into the nature of men and tenacity of essential purpose which enabled his uncle to regain his throne and maintain it among many pitfalls and dangers.

In one particular, vital to the success of his design, the dissimilarity proved irremediable. To Charles the difference between any one particular religious creed and another resembled only the varied trimmings of the same cloak, the cloth remained the same, the shape alone altered; to his nephew the determination to profess unalterable attachment to the Roman Catholic Church, unabatedly, immutably, continued a cardinal article of faith to his dying day.

In this, notwithstanding the urgent solicitude of Boling-

PRINCE JAMES FRANCIS STUART.

broke and his other supporters, James remained unchanged, and while the worldly wisdom of such constancy may be doubted, the high-souled sincerity must be deemed worthy of all praise.

From the death of his father, when, addressing Pope Clement XI., he averred that, in consonance with that father's dying wish, he would "always prefer the eternal salvation of his soul and the profession of the Roman Catholic faith to all transitory things and to all temporal advantages whatever,"* to the day when, on his coming of age, he declared that "our first duty is to render to your Holiness the homage and filial obedience due to you; . . . We are resolved that with God's grace no temptation of this world and no desire to reign shall ever make us wander from the right path of the Catholic faith," James, influenced, doubtless, by the teaching of his father and the unfaltering example of his mother, remained absolutely unmoved in his religious profession.

Strong representations of the necessity, at least, of dissembling his convictions were made to him; he put them on one side, never swerving for an instant from his cherished creed.

As late as January, 1715, Prior insisted that a successful conclusion to any attempt could never be anticipated unless James "made up with Protestantism."† But, though frequently the point is evaded, in no instance did the Prince show the least sign of wavering, the utmost concession which could be obtained from him consisting in a qualified promise "that he would hear and examine fairly whatever Churchmen or Laymen shall represent to him on these matters."‡

Yet knowing, as it is evident that he did know, the strength of the English prejudice against his religious tenets, James Stuart thought that at this period the British nation, in lieu of a German Prince, would welcome him back as its legitimate sovereign. Peaceably as the English people received George, in no way did he ever establish himself in their affections; the good impression created by his well-organised accession soon evaporated, leaving in its place distinct symptoms of disaffection and dislike, which

* "Stuart Papers," Historical MSS., vol. i., p. 161.
† *Ibid.*, p. 342. ‡ Salamon, p. 346.

inspired the Stuart aspirant with such confidence as to prompt him to make preparations for asserting his claim by force of arms.

Once before, some seven years back, in 1708, he attempted the same object by the same means.

Relying on the vehement discontent engendered in the Scottish people by the Act of Union—a dissatisfaction so keen as to induce them to lay aside their religious prejudices and, Presbyterians and Cameronians alike, condone the fact that the aspirant to the throne, James Stuart, was a Papist, alleging as the reason for their unwonted tolerance the hypothesis that "he might have Protestant children but the Union could never be good"*—he availed himself of the aid provided by Louis XIV. and made a descent upon the east coast of Scotland.

From beginning to end the expedition met with nothing but mishap. A severe gale sprang up; James became very sick; the transports ran ashore, and the French squadron, menaced by the English fleet under Sir George Byng, returned to France bearing with it the person of the luckless Prince, though, as the chronicler of these events cynically relates, if he had "landed accompanied only by his *valet de chambre* he could never have had a better opportunity to gain his point."†

To Bolingbroke and Berwick the history of the abortive expedition in 1708 proved a useful lesson. They plainly saw that the only hope of securing a successful rebellion lay in concerted action between England and Scotland, so that the efforts and struggles in the one kingdom might influence and inflame the other. But to effect a rising in England subsidies of arms and money were essential; also, plainly visible to the soldier eye of Berwick, a considerable stiffening of regular troops either from France or, in default, from those regiments in the pay of Charles of Sweden which were under Scottish leaders and had been trained under Scottish officers.

Fifty years before, the thought of an incursion of foreign troops into England would have aroused the racial instincts of the people to a pitch of fury. Times had changed. The

* Lockhart, vol. i., p. 224.

† Hoocke's "History," p. 152 *et passim*; Kerr of Kersland's "Memoirs," p. 64.

sight of a regiment of French dragoons escorting James III. would not appear a novelty to a populace accustomed to the spectacle of Dutch guards surrounding William III. The English taxpayer no longer resented alien troops as a badge of conquest, although he ruefully knew the price of foreign support, Batavian celebrities holding crown lands and Flemish squadrons filling their pockets with English pay and their stomachs with English beef and beer.

But any scheme of obtaining such assistance at that period presented many difficulties. As Berwick, in a letter to Bolingbroke, detailed with admirable logic, for twenty-six years Europe had been plunged into a sanguinary and expensive war which had broken the banks, ruined the commerce, and depleted the national resources both in men and material to such an extent that all the world desired nothing but to be permitted to live in peace and recuperate its shattered institutions. He truly argued that under these circumstances it was useless for James to expect substantial aid from foreign nations, although he might indeed rely on the allegiance and assistance of his own subjects, especially the Scottish Lords and Highlanders, who, to the reputed number of 15,000 men, were armed, ready and prepared.

In these views Bolingbroke concurred and devoted his own talents for statesmanship to the task of inducing Continental powers to afford material aid to the proposed enterprise.

But failure attended his efforts. Louis Quatorze, old, dying, and now devoid of much of the imperious will which bore him onward alike in victory or defeat, though still showing much attachment to the interests of his unfortunate guest, yet lacked both energy and means to put that sympathy into effective practice.

Beyond persuading the Spanish Court to lend 500,000 crowns the French King could do but little, and the knowledge of this inability constrained both Bolingbroke and Berwick to endeavour to curb the ardour of James.

They did not succeed, for circumstances in England acted as a stimulus to the Prince's desire for action; the British nation showed much discontent, politicians wavered even in their professions, the army itself exhibited signs of disaffection. Marlborough, though the shadow of his former

self, still held the office of Captain-General of the Forces, and in that capacity dispensed some patronage and enjoyed many perquisites. Led by his inveterate avarice, his management of the equipment of the troops, though doubtless remunerative to himself, did not prove equally satisfactory to the soldiers. The men of the Guard regiments bitterly complained of the character of the uniforms supplied to them, carrying their disapproval to the extremity of pulling off their shirts, bad, as they declared, in quality and insufficient in quantity, and throwing them over the wall of the gardens of St. James's and Marlborough House. With the fear of the insubordination spreading, Marlborough addressed the malcontents; his partial biographer, Archdeacon Coxe, declares that the oratory obliterated the memory of all grievances; as he also adds that the speech was "seconded by a liberal distribution of beer," it is possible under these circumstances to believe that considerable effect may have been produced by the Duke's eloquence and its liquid concomitants.*

The Government of George, well aware of the necessity of securing the adhesion of the army, took continuous and drastic steps to purge the ranks of all officers supposed to be addicted to Jacobite principles and to fill their places with staunch Whigs, fourteen Colonels of the Guards and many inferior officers being summarily dismissed.

On July 20 George attended the House of Lords in person, and through his mouthpiece, the Chancellor, informed the Peers that a spirit of rebellion had appeared in the land, and that attempts were preparing by the Pretender from abroad. In response the Lords made loyal declarations, the Commons requested the King to supplement the naval forces, to issue fresh commissions and raise such new regiments as might be required, promising him, without loss of time, to supply the necessary means.

In another direction the Government initiated reprisals: at the same sitting of the Houses Walpole produced six new accusations against Lord Oxford, and later, on August 5, reported articles of impeachment for high treason against the Duke of Ormonde.

The latter attack met with immediate success. Ormonde had flattered himself that his great popularity would in-

* Boyer, "Political State," vol. ix., p. 422.

fluence the Government in his favour; he had declared that he would stay at Richmond until he could "see the event of the parliamentary prosecution" impending, and his friend, the Duke of Devonshire, arranged a private audience for him with King George, not ill-disposed towards his magnificent subject, so that the reconciliation might be made at first hand.

But the action of the Commons damped the Duke's courage and destroyed his assurance; the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the decision to require not only an oath of allegiance to King George but a declaration of abjuration of the Pretender, also the additional enactment "for the further security of His Majesty's person and for extinguishing the hopes of the pretended Prince of Wales, of a reward of £100,000 for the seizure, alive or dead, of James Stuart," showed the Duke that he stood little chance of mercy at the hands of his Whig enemies.

He determined on flight. Calling on Lord Strafford he used his utmost persuasion to beguile that peer "to quit the Kingdom also," but he was "so far from decoying" him that Strafford "used all the rhetoric" of which he was master to induce the Duke to stay at home.

Ormonde refused, and on leaving sarcastically observed: "Good-bye, Earl without a head!" to which Strafford at once retorted: "Farewell, Duke without a Duchy!"*

On the night of July 21 the great Tory Peer left his house; riding to the Kentish coast he privately embarked on a small vessel, landing three days later on the coast of France, finally reaching Paris early in August.

* Pollnitz, vol. ii., p. 452.

CHAPTER IX

GUELPH DEFEATS STUART

To the Jacobite cause in England Ormonde's flight gave a deadly blow, for in the upraising of the English people against their German ruler lay the only chance of a revolution sufficiently complete to ensure the restoration of the Stuart dynasty; Ormonde, and Ormonde alone of the English peers, possessed the influence essential for effecting this purpose.

The design of the Jacobite Council comprised a plan by which, if the acts of the Whigs become too menacing towards the Duke and he felt the necessity of leaving London, he should at once betake himself to the West of England, wherein he possessed great influence, and there set up the standard of the Stuart King.

This scheme came to a disastrous end by the flight of Ormonde to France.

He arrived a fugitive, not a great feudal chieftain; a proscribed traitor, not a popular idol of the army; and the disillusionment which his appearance produced amongst the French courtiers operated most detrimentally to the cause of James. "We had sounded the Duke's name high; his reputation and the opinion of his power were great. The French began to believe that he was able to lead a Party, that the troops would join him, that the Nation would follow the signal whenever he drew the sword. But when in the midst of these high ideas they saw him arrive literally alone, they sank at once from their hopes."*

A few weeks only elapsed and an even greater calamity befell the Jacobites: Louis XIV., the magnificent protector and constant friend of the House of Stuart, died September 1, 1715. "My hopes sank as he declined and died when he expired. He was the best friend the Chevalier had,"† epigrammatically bewails Bolingbroke, who, if ever he entertained visions of the success of the proposed enterprise—which is to be doubted—now, under

* "Letter to Wyndham," p. 58. † *Ibid.*, p. 59.

these heavy blows, lost all his confidence though not his energy.

For a time expectation existed that prominent English statesmen—disgusted with the chosen policy of George, alienated, moreover, by his complete subservience to the Whig leaders and consequent neglect of the personal claims of others—would cast in their lot with the hereditary claimant to the throne. The Duke of Shrewsbury "frankly engaged"; the Earl of Peterborough gave hopes of his adhesion, but, temporarily, endeavoured "to keep on the best side of the bay"; and the Duke of Leeds "joined heart and soul," though the latter was deemed little better than a madman and no use except in the moment of a desperate attempt. More important still, signs were not wanting that Marlborough himself, reduced by the influence of Bothmar to the condition of a mere cipher in the Government, might give his valuable aid to the restoration of the Stuart Prince.

At that moment the great General showed much perplexity; the influence of Berwick, it was hoped, conceivably "might fix him," although any compact between the two must be kept secret from Ormonde, for, while nothing could "cool the zeal" of the latter, yet this might "give him some little dissatisfaction at heart."* Already, in April, Berwick wrote to Marlborough thanking him for his present, a sum of £2,000; again and again efforts were made to induce the Duke to part with more money, a process which cost the hero of Blenheim keen pangs of discomfort, but which eventually, in August, succeeded in extracting from him a similar amount. Yet though "pressed very home" as to his intentions in case of a rising, the constitutional caution of Marlborough enabled him to evade a direct reply, and he continued to keep on ostensibly good terms with George. Nevertheless, it may fairly be doubted whether the Whig Ministry trusted him or in any way took him into their counsels.†

Early in July the first organised symptoms of rebellion against the sway of George appeared.

John Erskine, Earl of Mar, formerly Secretary of State for Scotland in the reign of Anne, though coquetting with

* Stanhope, Appendix, p. xviii.
† "Stuart Papers," vol. i., pp. 407, 428.

the exiled Prince, yet, like many another in those days, when faced with the problem of accepting the advent of a King chosen by Parliament or of rising in armed resistance against the nominee of the Legislature, chose the first of the two alternatives, and offered his allegiance to the Constitutional Monarch.

But—an ominous fact—the newly appointed Ministers of George omitted to pay the usual complimentary visit to the Scottish Secretary alone of all the late Queen's servants. Excited by the fears this incident aroused, Mar wrote to King George, at that time in Holland, a letter detailing his services to the State in assisting the establishment of the union between England and Scotland, likewise assuring the new Sovereign that he would ever find the writer "as faithful and dutiful a subject and servant as ever any of my family have been to the Crown";* an expression of loyalty bearing two interpretations, as a recital of the acts of previous occupants of the Earldom of Mar would abundantly testify.

In answer to these professions some three weeks later, the King dismissed the Earl from the post of Secretary of State and appointed the Duke of Montrose in his place.

Under such circumstances, to resume the correspondence with the exiled Court and lend his house at Whitehall as a rendezvous for Jacobite conspirators seemed to Mar the natural course of conduct to pursue, with the logical result that some months later he thought it wise to embark, in disguise, on a collier in the Thames and sail for Newcastle-upon-Tyne accompanied by General Hamilton and Colonel Hay.

Arriving at that port early in August, the fugitives journeyed farther north, eventually, after a voyage of eight weeks, landing at Elie in Fife.†

Probably a preconcerted scheme for a rising had been prepared, the preliminary summons taking the form of an invitation to the Highland chiefs to attend a great hunting at Braemar, it being possible that, as suggested by a contemporary historian, "Hunting" should be the watchword by which they might understand the design of their meeting.

* Rae's "History," p. 86; Patten's "History," p. 126; Boyer, "Political State," vol. x., p. 298.

† Tindal's "History," vol. vi., p. 406; Sinclair's "Memoirs," p. 15.

Many noblemen and chieftains responded to the call, including the Marquises of Huntly and Tullibardine, eldest sons, respectively, of the Dukes of Gordon and Atholl; the fathers still supporting King George, outwardly at least, thus following the procedure of the times and endeavouring to keep on good terms with both the contending factions until the ascendancy of one or the other became assured. To those assembled Mar declared that he had received a commission from King James appointing him Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and then urged them to assist the legitimate aspirant to the throne, promising that succour would arrive speedily from France, that a rising would take place in England, and that James himself would shortly appear among them.

The conference dispersed after prolonged deliberation. Mar meanwhile, on receiving further assurance of co-operation, proclaimed James III. King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, setting up the royal standard in the little town of Kirkmichael; immediately after the ceremony visiting other villages and townships for the purpose of collecting forces.*

With that prescience not uncommon with writers who compile their records after events have actually occurred, the contemporary historians relate how the fall of the gilt ball from the top of the staff which bore the royal ensign caused the superstitious Highlanders to anticipate the failure of the enterprise and regard with doubt and fear the future of the expedition.

Wiser heads also held this opinion, their forebodings being founded on their knowledge of the circumstances then existent.

James, at the moment of the outbreak of hostilities, possessed two experienced and talented advisers, well qualified to give counsel on military and political enterprises: Berwick and Bolingbroke. With the strange fatuity which ever haunted the Stuart race, at this, the critical moment of his career, he forsook the advice of both and followed the promptings of his own opinion.

The absolute necessity of simultaneous risings in England and Scotland was continually insisted and urged by both the skilled councillors of James, for the condition of affairs

* Rae, p. 191; Patten, p. 132.

in France had changed considerably on the death of Louis XIV.

Philip of Orleans, now Regent, only with much detraction shared the predilection for the family of Stuart so consistently shown by the late King; though not actively hostile, he made sufficiently clear that no substantial aid, either in men or in money, would be supplied by him or his Ministers. The Swedish troops under Major-General Hamilton waiting, as was hoped, at Gottenburg for transport to England, now, as Bolingbroke complained, received orders from Charles XII., much influenced by French money, not to embark, the subsidy paid for their services being returned.

The only hope, therefore, of any successful issue to Mar's venture lay in a vigorous outbreak of Jacobitism in England.

To effect this purpose, the Duke of Ormonde, trusting to his popularity in the West of England, set out for Devonshire on the evening of October 24.* Though an honourable gentleman and a brave soldier, the Duke inherited none of the sterling qualities of his grandfather, that distinguished nobleman who, together with Clarendon, formed the pillar of strength which supported Charles II. during his long exile. This second holder of the title, "our good hearty Duke," always wanted "a good head with him." Accustomed to live in great magnificence, invariably surrounded by a crowd of pushing followers, as in Paris, so now, every project was discussed in public, all secret manœuvres made impossible.

Actually the English Government possessed full information concerning the whole scheme of rebellion.

Sir John Maclean, a confidential agent of Ormonde, who had been in all things trusted with the plan of the rising in the West, betrayed the plot, and thus enabled the Ministry to take the steps necessary to defeat the design.† Warrants were issued at once for those suspected of complicity in Jacobite schemes, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Dupplin and Lord Jersey, among the peers, being immediately apprehended; Sir William Wyndham, Mr. Thomas Forster and four other Members of Parliament especially mentioned in a denunciatory resolution passed by the House of Commons.

* "Stuart Papers," vol. i., p. 447.

† *Ibid.*, p. 452.

The effect of these measures rendered Ormonde's expedition positively nugatory.

Having sailed for England on October 24, accompanied, as a bodyguard, by some twenty Irish troopers belonging to a regiment commanded by Colonel Nugent in the pay of France, all fully accoutred in their uniforms with arms complete, the Duke quickly reached Torbay and gave the preconcerted signal by firing cannon shots. No notice being taken of this warning, he communicated with the shore, and then heard of the precautionary measures instituted by the Government, the arrest of all the suspected Jacobite leaders, and the efforts made by those of the Hanoverian party who possessed local influence to prevent any rising in favour of the exiled family.*

Ormonde, destitute of any resourceful capacity, entirely at a loss for an expedient in such an emergency, could contrive no other scheme than to make his way back to France, reaching St. Malo, where he disembarked after a few days' voyage, the expedition having started, failed, and returned in less than a fortnight.†

When the plan of this abortive enterprise was devised, a commission was given to Thomas Forster, Member of Parliament for the county of Northumberland, to command, during the absence of the Duke, all such persons as should be willing to repair to the royal standard.

Forster, the presentative of a well-known and influential North Country family, when included in the number of those for whose arrest warrants had been issued, made his escape from the messenger sent to apprehend him, and forthwith took steps to draw together all in Northumberland who favoured the cause of the exiled Prince, Lord Derwentwater and many other gentlemen of the neighbourhood obeying his summons.

In other directions also the rebellion spread; Lord Kenmure, having collected some persons of influence and their retainers, proclaimed King James at Moffat, but after an ineffectual threatening of Dumfries, where many friends of the House of Hanover opposed the approach of the Jacobites, this nobleman and his followers, to the number of 180, proceeded to Hawick, and there received an invitation from Forster to join him, a request with which the

* *Political Mercury*, October, 1715. † Tindal, vol. vi., p. 425.

Scotsmen gladly complied, marching through Jedburgh and meeting their English allies at Rothbury on October 18, after a long and tedious journey through very difficult country.

The English contingent, neither so well armed nor disciplined as their Scottish friends, suffered also from the incapacity of their General, Thomas Forster, who, entirely destitute of military knowledge or experience, owed his commission to his family influence—"for the sake of his Uncle and Aunt," writes his cousin, Lady Cowper—probably also to the fact that he happened to be the only Protestant of any social position among the rebel leaders.*

Mar at the inception of his onset met with but little opposition.

The English Government, fearing the influence of Ormonde, despatched the larger portion of the troops at its disposal, numbering barely 8,000 men, to the Western counties to deal with any rising which should occur in those parts of the kingdom, but also sent orders to General Whetham, then in command in Scotland, there to take such steps as he might deem necessary. That officer detailed Major-General Wightman with four regiments of infantry and four of dragoons to hold the important post of Stirling, the establishment of the regiments, however, being so reduced that the whole force only consisted of 1,500 men.†

The Government supplemented their military operations by taking advantage of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and detaining in custody many of the reputed favourers of the Jacobite cause, notably Lockhart of Carnwath and the Earls of Kinnoull, Hume and Wigton.

They also summoned to surrender the veteran Earl of Breadalbane, an influential chieftain and a "grave Merrie man." Acting apparently up to his reputed character the noble lord refrained from obeying the summons, but forwarded to the authorities a certificate signed by his medical and his religious advisers, his physician and his parish minister, both testifying that their patron suffered from a unique complication of ailments, ranging from a "rheum" to an attack of the stone and the "stickles," the ecclesi-

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 57; Oldmixon, p. 616.
† Rae, p. 207.

astical expert, however, omitting any reference to the morals or the veracity of the patient, the absence of both obviously being a matter of common knowledge.

On the night of September 14 the Duke of Argyll, Commander-in-Chief of the Scottish forces, reached Edinburgh, and next day set out for Stirling, where he reviewed the garrison, still much depleted both in men and reserves. Mar, in the meanwhile, advanced to Dunkeld, and, hearing that the Hanoverian troops intended to attack Perth, at once despatched a force to that important place, which he occupied on September 18, marching thither his whole army, now swelled to some 12,000 men.

With such a force a capable commander could have controlled the situation, but Mar, though an adroit and resourceful politician, lacked every military quality necessary to a successful general. Personally unpopular, distrusted by his fellow-countrymen, " a man of good sense but bad morals," many important chieftains resented his appointment as their leader; as the Master of Sinclair complains: " the Duke of Atholl would have done more in raising the Highlands in one day than Mar did in two months ";* and the observation gains point from the knowledge, common in the Scottish ranks, that the Duke himself showed a strong desire to assume the most prominent position, hoping, indeed, to " be valued as another Monck." When disappointed in his aspirations, this important magnate became indifferent to the success of the undertaking, and although it is true that he permitted his eldest son, the Marquis of Tullibardine, to join the rebel army, yet he threw his personal influence into the scale in favour of King George, thus materially contributing to the defeat of the conspiracy.

By a rapid attack on Argyll before that nobleman could have augmented his forces, Mar might have dealt such a heavy blow as would have scattered the meagre array of the Hanoverian Commander and ensured the triumph of the Stuarts. But Mar did nothing of the kind; after making a futile march to Dunblane for the purpose of cutting off the enemy advancing from Stirling, he, when Argyll, in the face of superior forces, prudently retired to his former station, also retraced his steps to his previous position in

* Sinclair's " Memoirs."

Perth, and contented himself with sending some troops on a useless expedition to harry Inverness.

The rising now assumed serious dimensions; the Ministry in London took the important step of appointing General Carpenter—an officer of experience in the Spanish War and a favourite with Stanhope, to whose partiality he owed his advancement—as Commander-in-Chief of the army in England, thus signalising the effacement of Marlborough, who, though treated with respect, had lost the confidence of both parties in the State.

It is evident at this time that, although the Ministry felt some anxiety with regard to the immediate course of events, no serious doubt existed in its mind as to the ultimate failure of the rebellion.

Stanhope, the moving spirit of the Government, himself a soldier of ability, knew that with the advent of the Dutch contingent and other foreign aid the ill-conceived movements of the Jacobites could only result in defeat and disaster; and he, doubtless, agreed with the opinion expressed by Lord Stair, that though the rebels might appear very strong at first " when they had their bellies filled with beef and their heads with beer, by the time they had lain a week under a hedge, by the end of October or beginning of November, their army might melt away to nothing or undoubtedly be easy enough to deal with."*

That Lord Stair gauged the situation accurately subsequent events confirmed.

Notwithstanding that " most of the country north of the Forth was in the hands of the rebels and south of it overrun by them,"† no definite plan of campaign existed, and no single person in their ranks seemed capable of controlling the action of the assembled forces. With one notable exception—the brilliant feat of the Laird of Borlum, better known as Brigadier-General Mackintosh, who, with 2,000 Highlanders, crossed the great estuary of the Forth, some sixteen or seventeen miles wide, in open boats and in the teeth of a hostile squadron—the direction of the expedition became a monumental example of ineptitude and incapacity.

Rejecting the proposition of marching on the Royal

* Historical Society MSS., 3rd Report, p. 384.
† Treasury Calendars, 1714–1719.

forces at once while they remained few in number and destitute of proper munitions—a suggestion admirable in conception and which, if carried out successfully, would have changed the face of the whole rebellion—the troops under Forster, after much discussion and recrimination, left Kelso and marched to the Border, bent on an invasion of England, being strengthened by the advent of Mackintosh and his gallant column.

Meeting with little or no opposition, a great army of local levies under Lord Lonsdale—variously computed at ten, twelve, twenty-five thousand men—fleeing before them without striking a blow—" the Militia is a thing mightily cried up, but not a force to be relied on for action," as a newspaper of the period mournfully confessed—the Jacobite army triumphantly continued to advance.

Occupying Preston, hurriedly evacuated by the Hanoverian troops, the invading forces rested for a while and, as an onlooker testifies, enjoyed themselves agreeably: " The ladies of Preston were so well dressed and good-looking that the gentlemen soldiers from Wednesday to Saturday minded nothing but courting and feasting."

Remaining in this false security, their leader being absolutely destitute of even an elementary knowledge of military affairs and completely ignorant of the movements of the enemy, the rebel army allowed itself to be surrounded by the troops of King George under the command of General Wills. Although the Royal forces met with a heavy repulse on the first assault, largely attributable to the great strength of the rebel position and the undoubted courage of the desperate Jacobites, yet on the arrival of General Carpenter with reinforcements, the hopelessness of the outlook so impressed the unfortunate Forster, fatuously incompetent and completely overwhelmed by the responsibility which he had taken on himself, that, without consulting any of his colleagues except Lord Widdrington, he made an offer of capitulation to the Hanoverian Commander.

This abject surrender becoming known, the deepest anger and dissatisfaction arose in the ranks of the Jacobites, the Highlanders declaring that they would cut their way through the enemy, some of the officers threatening personal violence to their incompetent General, who had " little to

say but that he was not fit for the post he was in, was sorry for what he had done, and wept like a child."

The rebels obtained no grace, an unconditional surrender being the only terms allowed; but without a leader, divided in counsels and, possibly, straitened in munitions, the Jacobites, despairing of escape, yielded themselves prisoners without a further effort to avoid their doom.

Of the prisoners the chiefs, Forster, Mackintosh, the Lords Derwentwater, Nithsdale, Wintoun, Carnwath, Kenmure, and many more were despatched at once to London to await their trial, the bulk of the lesser officers and men being marched to Lancaster, Chester, Liverpool and other places until such time as a Commission could be appointed to deal with them.

The disastrous result of this rising not only destroyed the hopes of the Jacobites in the Northern Counties, it demonstrated the complete indifference with which the masses of the English people regarded the cause of the Stuarts. A powerful and popular movement in England in favour of James alone could have given stability to his attempted restoration; the surrender at Preston proved that such a feeling did not exist, and the disaster became irreparable because, at the time when the incapacity of the leader of the English rebels brought about one calamitous issue, an equal lack of military qualifications in the Commander of the Scottish Jacobites caused that which might have been a victorious action to produce the effect of an inglorious defeat.

On Sunday, November 13, the very day of Forster's ignominious surrender, the troops under Mar, on the moor to the north-east of Dunblane, gave battle to Argyll's army.

Many narratives of this engagement at Sheriffmuir exist, differing, as is but natural, in several particulars, but the despatch of Major-General Wightman, who commanded Argyll's right wing, gives the clearest and most concise account, which, when taken with the other relations, elucidates the conflicting incidents of the flight.

From this account it is clear that Mar, by his incompetence, failed to take advantage of a tactical error committed by the Duke, who, with several squadrons of horse, charged the left flank of the Jacobite army so furiously as to drive it a mile and a half from the field, but by so doing

lost all connection with the remainder of his own forces. As a cynical contemporary critic observed: "His Grace was a better Churchman than a General, for his right hand knew not what his left was doing."

While the Scottish Generalissimo drove a portion of the enemy from the field, the main body of Mar's forces fell upon the residue of his troops with "all the fury imaginable and cut off half our foot and the squadrons on our left."* Such being the rueful confession of Argyll's experienced commander.

If Mar had possessed any military ability whatsoever he could easily, as the foregoing narrative states explicitly, have entirely destroyed the bulk of his opponent's forces, but the measure of his capacity can be gauged from his own version of the battle wherein he declares: "Our left behaved scandalously and ran away, but our right routed the enemy's left and most of his body. Their right followed and pursued our left, which made me not adventure to prosecute and push our advantage on our right so far as otherwise we might have done. However, we kept the field of battle and the enemy retired to Dumblain."†

The next morning all the glamour of victory vanished, and the Jacobite commander was fain to confess that he found his army "reduced to small numbers, the more by the Highlanders going home than by any losses sustained, which was small," and he despairingly complains that unless James brings or sends succour and troops he fails to see how the enemy can be opposed, "even for the winter."

The losses of men and material were greater among the Jacobites than in Argyll's forces, both the moral and the material victory remaining with the army of the English Government.‡

While his two generals, by their ineffective efforts, destroyed the chances of his restoration, James himself remained in a condition of great uncertainty as to his own future movements.

On his arrival at St. Malo, on November 8, he found Ormonde returned from the abortive expedition to England,

* Rae, p. 303; Wightman's Narrative; *Political Mercury*, Nov., 1715.
† Mar and Kellie; Historical MSS. Reports, p. 514; R.O. Scotland, George I., Bundle 10, No. 48.
‡ R.O. Scotland, George I., Bundle 10, Nos. 48 and 51.

and after consultation with his advisers—fearing that the influence of Lord Stair over the Regent might cause that "easy gentleman" to prohibit the proposed expedition and stop all supplies to the Scottish insurgents—resolved that Ormonde should endeavour, without further delay, to raise a rebellion, either in Lancashire or Cornwall, whilst he himself, the Prince and leader, would attempt to land on the West Coast of Scotland and join the forces then fighting under Lord Mar.

Before undertaking this journey Bolingbroke prepared a proclamation to be issued and published extensively in England. With great care and much ability the Secretary penned sentences in his own glowing prose which would, he hoped, remove from the minds of Englishmen all doubts regarding the attitude of James towards the Anglican Church, in the opinion of the English Jacobites a point of vital importance.

James altered the draft in many essential particulars and in such a manner as to draw from Bolingbroke in after years the bitter accusation that "the whole tenour of the amendments was one continued instance of the grossest bigotry, and the most material passages were turned with all the Jesuitical prevarication imaginable." Especially did the writer of the proclamation resent the emendations made by James in the periods referring to the late Queen Anne. The Minister described his dead mistress as "of glorious and blessed memory," and "remarkable for her eminent justice and exemplary piety"; the half-brother of the deceased Sovereign excised the epithet "blessed" and altered the eulogy on her piety to the somewhat trite expression, "her inclination to justice." Moreover the sentence, "But since the time when it pleased Almighty God to take her to Himself," he changed to the bare record of her death in the words, "put an end to her life," driving Bolingbroke to exclaim in angry irritation: "Not content with calling her neither just nor pious in this world he did little less than declare her damned in the other."*

In fact, the changes made in the draft of this important document clearly indicated the lack of interest, if not the covert dislike, with which James regarded the Church of England and, in many minds, instilled the belief that he

* Bolingbroke, "Letter to Wyndham," pp. 112, 113, 117.

could not reconcile his conscience to promise anything more than bare toleration to that which he regarded as an heretical institution, even this concession being the outcome of political consideration rather than the result of true religious charity.

Ormonde's second attempt, "one of those adventures which rendered the hero of La Mancha immortal," met with even less success than his former enterprise. Blown about by contrary winds the Duke, directly after sailing, took refuge at the Isle of Bréhut, and when, seeing the difficulty of doubling the Land's End, he determined to attempt again to revive the loyalty of the West Country and sailed for Cornwall, such tempestuous weather set in that, after some days' buffeting at sea, he returned to France absolutely without effecting any useful purpose.

In the meanwhile James determined on embarking for Scotland at the first convenient opportunity, the extreme vigilance of Stair, the English Ambassador, making the attempt very hazardous.

That energetic diplomatist left no effort untried to induce the Duke of Orleans to issue commands for the prohibition of the departure of the Stuart Prince, the remonstrance eliciting from the French Regent only the caustic remark that he was "neither the spy nor the provost marshal of his cousin George."*

Yet truly James found much difficulty in escaping from France; a squadron of English ships constantly patrolled the coast in the vicinity of St. Malo, stopping egress from the neighbourhood, so at last, in disguise and passing by the name of Dupuis, the Royal exile surreptitiously made his way to Dunkirk.

There, embarking on a small sloop of less than 200 tons, he sailed for Scotland on December 22, 1715, accompanied only by the Marquis of Teignmouth, son of the Duc de Berwick, and three or four servants, after a voyage of seven days arriving safely at Peterhead, a promontory not far from Aberdeen.†

Staying at Fetteresso, the house of the Earl Marischal, where he received addresses from the Episcopal Clergy and Magistrates of Aberdeen, he was joined, on December 27,

* Berwick, vol. ii., p. 251.
† *Mar's Journal;* Patten's "History," p. 217.

by his gallant host, also by the Earl of Mar, General Hamilton and twenty or thirty persons of quality, who, after paying all due allegiance, proclaimed him King and proposed to act as his escort on his journey.

On nearly every important occasion of his life James, never possessing a very strong constitution, became ill. At Fetteresso he was seized with an attack of ague which delayed his departure for seven days, and not until January 2 did he commence his royal progress to join the army.

Travelling by way of Brechin, Kinnaird and Glamis, he reached Dundee accompanied by a retinue of 300 men, where the populace received him with royal honours, thronging round him and kissing his hand. At Scone, his next resting-place, he slept in "a rich crimson bed" brought from Dupplin for his special use, and on Monday, January 9, made his entry into Perth and reviewed the portion of the army there stationed.

The disillusionment both of Prince and people came quickly.

The fiction had been promulgated industriously by Mar and his colleagues that the Jacobite army after the fight at Sheriffmuir—always described as a victory—maintained its strength both in men and material, and continued full of determination to hold its ground.

James, deceived by this false report, only discovered the truth upon seeing with his own eyes the quantity and the quality of the forces at his disposal. Mar acknowledged in his recital of these events, written at Paris in later years, that the Jacobites possessed neither men, ammunition, nor arms, that the advent of the Chevalier brought no succour from abroad nor fresh influx of recruits from home; in short, that their condition after James's arrival was no way "bettered except by the new life his presence gave to the small number we had at that time brought together."*

To James the sight of his army only brought a sense of the hopelessness of his cause, a hopelessness which reflected itself in his countenance.

The courtier might dilate on the enthusiasm engendered by the advent of the Prince, but the humble followers felt no such enlivening influence. An eye-witness of these

* *Mar's Journal;* Patten's "History," p. 203.

events writes: "I must not conceal that when we saw the Person whom they called our King we found ourselves not at all animated by his presence, and if he were disappointed in us we were tenfold more in him; . . . he never appeared with cheerfulness and vigour to arouse us, . . . his countenance looked extremely heavy, . . . some said the circumstances he found us in dejected him. I am sure the figure he made dejected us, and had he sent us but 5,000 men of good troops and never come among us we had done other things than we have done now."*

Truly the aspect of affairs looked threatening. With Argyll strongly reinforced by General Cadogan, and a powerful artillery advancing on the south-west, and a hostile array under the Earl of Sutherland and Lord Lovat threatening him on the north, Mar found himself in a most dangerous situation, and knowing full well the inherent weakness of his position, determined on a retreat to Dundee.

Hotly pressed by King George's troops the discomfited Jacobites, much reduced in number and more in spirit, retired still further towards Montrose and Brechin, Mar reporting that stores and supplies could only be obtained from the harbour at the former place.

Whether or no the rebel chiefs expected to find succour of any kind at the seaport is to be doubted; that the pressing advance of Argyll's army completely disconcerted them is certain, and that the leaders for long had despaired of a successful issue is manifest in all their speeches and counsels.

"It happened, providentially, that there was just ready in the Harbour a small ship that was designed to carry a Gentleman that was there to be sent to a Foreign Court"; the sight of the vessel suggested to Mar and some of his colleagues the idea that such an opportunity of providing for the safety of the unhappy Prince for whom they were struggling should not lightly be neglected.

They represented to James the difficulties of the situation, and pressed upon him the argument that the best hope of saving his followers from the extreme vengeance of the English Government lay in his return once more to France, thus leaving them, both high and low, completely free to make with the victors the most lenient terms they could obtain.

* "The Proceedings at Perth," p. 341.

James yielded to their solicitation; on February 4, ordering the Highlanders to be ready to march towards Aberdeen, his own private guard being mounted and prepared to accompany him there, he left his quarters by a side door, joined the Earl of Mar, and hurried to the port accompanied by only one servant.

A boat quickly carried them to the *Santa Teresa of St. Malo*, a ship of 90 tons, "a clean tallowed French snow, which rowed out of the harbour and close in shore a good way with sails furled," thus escaping the vigilance of the royal galleys which watched the coast; although Captain Stuart of the *Pearl* sloop obtained early information concerning the flight and endeavoured, without avail, to catch the fugitives.

On February 9 James and his companions landed at Waldam, a village between Calais and Gravelines, and proceeded to Paris.

With the departure of their Prince, although but a figurehead, the rebellion, always half-hearted, entirely collapsed. Unconscious of the flight of their General the army, now numbering barely 4,000 men, continued its way to Aberdeen. There, at a meeting of the chiefs, a message from James was read explaining the necessity and reason of the step he had taken, also desiring them to render all obedience to General Gordon, whom he appointed Commander-in-Chief.

At this announcement, absolutely unexpected by the rank and file, "a visible alteration appeared immediately in men's minds as well as countenances, . . . it was surprising to see the extravagance of speech and spleen to which the first transport of discontent or what you please to call it carried some people to." Against Mar the feeling rose high, the Earl Marischal indulging "in most injurious expressions," and a "settled grudge arose in the hearts of others."*

To an impartial judgment Mar had not earned this obloquy. Whatever may have been his faults as a leader, at this juncture he advised James—if his own account is to be believed—to tell "their heads" of the intended retreat to France, but General Gordon, fearing that injury to his own authority would ensue, was "absolutely against it and so it was not done."†

* "Stuart Papers," vol. ii., pp. 110, 111. † *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Nevertheless the result of this advice was disastrous. The absence of the Prince and the Commander-in-Chief completed the failure of the rebellion. To make their peace as soon as possible remained the only object of the prime movers in the rising; "everybody thought of nothing but preserving themselves and getting the best terms they could, but all agreed the only hope of mercy lay in sticking together and asking for it in a body."

No terms would be granted; Earl Marischal and Hay sought an interview with Argyll without obtaining any mitigation of severity, then one by one the rebel leaders surrendered and their followers dispersed, the chieftains escaping to various countries on the Continent, the clansmen taking refuge in the mountains.

Cadogan, a professional soldier, devoid of sympathy with the rebels, quickly completed the campaign, the Dutch troops burning and slaying in all directions, by April, 1716, stamping out the last embers of revolt.

By the manner and secrecy of his escape James incurred bitter criticism and many reproaches, not all of which were deserved. The reasons which prompted him to leave his followers, hurriedly and in an undignified manner, sprang, not from a desire to secure his own safety, but from the knowledge insistently pressed on him by all his advisers, which subsequent events proved to be sound, that by his flight alone could his adherents gain an opportunity of obtaining lenient terms from the victor.

He counselled them to make the best bargain they could, until the time might come when he would return again with foreign succour, and he took the extreme course of forwarding to Argyll a sum of money for the relief of the inhabitants of those villages whose houses the exigencies of military necessity caused to be burnt.*

James was no coward, as his previous record incontrovertibly demonstrates; yet the chronic melancholy of his disposition and the habitual depression produced by a premonition that success would never attend his cause deprived him of all sanguine energy and produced an equally disheartening effect upon his adherents; to this and to Mar's military incapacity must be attributed the total miscarriage of the attempt.

* *Mar's Journal*; Patten's "History," p. 207.

When the history of previous and subsequent risings is recalled, when it is remembered how frequently the impetuous valour of the Highland clans broke and scattered the cumbersome ranks of the regular army, a question naturally arises as to the cause of the complete and almost ignominious failure of the rebellion of 1715.

The reason of the non-success is not far to seek.

In all the previous operations, whether against the Roundheads or the troops of the Revolution, the wild adventurous Highlanders were led by men as chivalrous and undaunted as themselves. James Grahame, Marquis of Montrose, his namesake, James Grahame of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee, high-souled and devoted adherents to Monarchy, brilliant soldiers of genius and experience, above all possessed—and in this lay their power—a glamour derived from their own individuality, thus inspiring to absolute heroism the excitable and mercurial warriors who composed the bulk of the forces which they led.

Neither James Stuart nor Mar could claim, even in the smallest degree, the magnetic qualities essential for the purpose they sought to obtain, in both this lack of personal influence being in no way compensated by either military capacity or such talents as are essential to those who aspire to achieve great ends by means of the devotion and self-sacrifice of a small but high-spirited band of followers.

CHAPTER X

GUELPH TRIUMPHANT

With the defeat of the Scottish rebels and the flight of the Pretender to the crown, the succession of the House of Hanover became assured; never again during the lifetime of George did any menace from internal strife seriously threaten the stability of his throne.

Disaffection to his dynasty, it is true, existed; in some places fealty to that prince, whom they still regarded as their legitimate monarch, held possession of a few ancient adherents to the Stuart cause, but, in England at least, the opinions of the bulk of those who continued to profess Jacobitism could well be expressed in Sir John Byrom's witty lines:

> "God bless the King; God bless the Faith's Defender;
> God bless, no harm in blessing the Pretender:
> Who that Pretender is and who that King,
> God bless my soul, that's quite another thing."

The fugitive Prince, returning to France, on reaching St. Germains met Bolingbroke. James at once received the Secretary with open arms, discussed with him various projects for the future domicile of the Jacobite Court and considered the request, strongly urged by the Regent, that he and his household should depart forthwith to Lorraine. With this proposal, couched in almost peremptory terms, Bolingbroke entirely concurred, but circumstances, over which at least the Secretary had no control, prevented his advice being followed.

Like certain Biblical characters whose piety and whose continence were in inverse proportion, James varied his devout religious exercises by sporadic indulgence in carnal pleasures.

The hardships of a winter campaign in the frigid climate of Scotland greatly disposed him for the solace of feminine sympathy and companionship; "instead of taking post for Lorraine, he went to the little house in the Bois de

Boulogne where his female ministers resided, and here he continued hiding for several days."*

During his sojourn in this place, the abode of Mademoiselle de la Chaufferage, his seductive advisers urged him to pursue a certain course and rid himself of those of his Ministers whose opinions often clashed with his own.

Two able administrators assisted in the Jacobite councils: Berwick, an experienced General, and Bolingbroke, a resourceful Statesman. James, a true Stuart, rejected the advice of both and confided his fortunes to the care of his least competent followers.

Disgusted at having his opinions so often ignored and his professional warnings neglected, Berwick, taking advantage of his French naturalisation, pleaded the absolute necessity of obtaining the Regent's permission if he were to take part in the Scottish expedition, then, making but little effort to secure the required leave, stayed quietly in France rather than participate in a venture foredoomed to failure.

Bolingbroke by his genius excited the jealousy of the two mediocrities, Mar and Ormonde, while friction undoubtedly arose between the opinionated James and his masterful Minister on the wording of the Declaration concerning the Church of England.

Two or three days after the arrival of the fugitives Ormonde called on Bolingbroke and handed to him two scraps of paper, " drawn in the style of a justice of the peace warrant," dismissing him from his office and demanding his official papers, which, as Bolingbroke contemptuously observed, might have been " contained in a letter case of moderate size." The ostensible cause of this abrupt procedure lay in the alleged neglect of the Secretary to provide the army in Scotland with requisite munitions and stores; bitter complaints emanated from the fighting men of the lack of necessaries for a campaign, and it suited the convenience of both Mar and Ormonde, with whom Bolingbroke never stood on good terms, to cast the whole blame upon the Secretary.

Berwick bears strong witness to the absolute inequity of this accusation: " I owe him the justice to say that he left nothing undone of what he could do; he moved heaven and

* " Letter to Wyndham," p. 91.

earth to obtain supplies, but was always put off by the Court of France."*

The real reason of the dismissal lay deeper: in the complete incompatibility between the master and the man; the dull, timid nature of James, devout in observance but with a religion " not founded on the love of virtue and the detestation of vice but fear of the horns of the Devil and the flames of Hell; the superstition of the capuchin not the religion of the prince,"† had nothing in common with the adventurous fiery genius of the free-thinking Secretary, who, as the above extract from his writings shows, felt but little respect and no admiration for this aspirant to a throne whom he regarded as a hesitating bigot, void of every quality requisite for the great position he sought to obtain.

" I believe," writes Stair to Horace Walpole, " all poor Harry's fault was that he could not play his part with a grave enough face; he could not help laughing now and then at such Kings and Queens."‡

Probably Stair spoke truly; neither to the Queen Mother, Mary of Modena, to whose influence some writers attribute Bolingbroke's disgrace, nor to James himself did the Secretary pay courtier-like deference; their offended pride, the influence of the intriguing women and the jealousy of his incompetent colleagues brought about the dismissal, an act, as Berwick wisely said, of enormous folly on the part of King James " when he chased away the only Englishman capable of managing his affairs."

While the Pretender thus treated his ablest Minister, the lesser adherents to the Jacobite cause met with far more drastic treatment at the hands of King George and his Government.

Directly after the surrender at Preston a court martial proceeded to try, for the crime of desertion, Lord Charles Murray, Major Nairne, Captain Philip Lockhart, a brother of the chronicler, Captain Shafto, Ensign Erskine and Ensign Dalziel, brother to the Earl of Carnwath, who, being officers on half pay, presumably committed a military offence in fighting against the Crown from which they received emoluments. The Judge Advocate having reached Preston November 28, the trial began.

* Berwick, " Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 262.
† " Letter to Wyndham," p. 91.
‡ Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 307.

The Court acquitted Ensign Dalziel on proof of his having resigned his commission before the outbreak of hostilities, but found the other five prisoners guilty and sentenced them to death, Nairne, Lockhart, Shafto and Erskine being shot on December 2.

Lord Charles Murray, the younger son of the Duke of Atholl, by bringing family influence to bear—his father, ostensibly, supporting the Government—obtained a reprieve for a time, during which interval he contrived to effect an escape, possibly by the connivance of his gaoler.

To impress the London mob, to magnify the glory of the triumph achieved by the troops of King George, the unfortunate prisoners sent to London for trial were compelled to form part of an imposing procession. Their arms bound with cords tied across their backs, seated on horses destitute of bridles and led by foot soldiers, the unfortunate men marched from Highgate to the prisons allotted to receive them, surrounded by Horse Grenadiers and platoons of infantry, the General's drums beating a victorious march and the fickle crowd shouting: " King George for ever, no warming pan bastard."*

While the leaders fared thus, the rank and file, " not being gentlemen or men of estates," were compelled to cast lots, one in twenty being drawn to stand his trial;† the wretches herded together in the pestiferous prisons of that period suffering heavily, " crowded like beasts in a fold, consumed with fever and daily dying with ill usage and want of necessaries."

When condemned they were transported and sold as forced labourers. " About two hundred of these poor people were sent to the Plantations all in chains; such instances of barbarity and cruelty can scarce be given in the reign of Nero or Oliver Cromwell,"‡ came the bitter cry of an afflicted Jacobite, and the Treasury records afford corroboration that these miserable people, at the cost of 40s. per head, were shipped out to the West Indies and there sold to some plantation to serve compulsorily the proprietor for seven years.§

The High Sheriff of Lancashire alleged that he caused

* " Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 61.
† R.O. Domestic, George I., Bundle 2, No. 95.
‡ " Stuart Papers," vol. ii., p. 232.
§ Treasury Calendars, 1714–1719, p. 220.

thirty-four of the minor leaders to be executed, and returned his expenses for that number. Some question as to the accuracy of his accounts arose,* but, certainly, twenty-six were hanged, drawn and quartered, among them Colonel Oxburgh and Richard Gascoigne, while two months later John Hall, a gentleman of good position, and William Paul, a clergyman, suffered in like manner.

A more elaborate procedure awaited the Earls of Derwentwater and Nithsdale, who, together with Lord Kenmure, Lord Widdrington, Lord Wintoun and the other rebel noblemen were arraigned for high treason early in the New Year, Westminster Hall being the place of trial. Lord Cowper, the Lord Chancellor, presided, being nominated Lord Steward, "a grinning honour," so his wife, quoting Falstaff's complaint, designates the appointment, as the only privilege connected with the post lay in the fact that the Lord Steward paid the whole expense of the ceremony out of his own pocket.

To the unfortunate prisoners this procedure of trial by impeachment of the House of Commons operated as an additional hardship.

If they had been tried by their peers, according to the usual custom, not only was the chance of acquittal much greater, but no difficulties would have lain in the way of a royal pardon, whereas in the case of impeachment by the Houses of Parliament such act of grace became unconstitutional.

The accused persons, deprived, in accordance with the usual practice of that harsh period, of the assistance of legal counsel, except on points of law, were obliged to conduct their own defence, a sufficiently difficult task at any time for a poor wretch struggling for his life, but in the event of a trial by impeachment in Westminster Hall an almost impossible performance owing to the vastness of the auditorium and the elaborate prolixity of the indictment.

In the case of these rebel lords, in addition to the charge of attempting to "deprive the nation of the invaluable blessing which it enjoyed" under the rule of the House of Hanover, they were accused by implication of "assisting men in holy orders (all this in the last years of Queen Anne) to pervert and abuse the wholesome doctrine of the Church

* Treasury Calendars, 1714–1719, p. 225.

of England by wresting the Holy Scriptures "; no wonder that the prisoners one and all seemed " under great dejection of mind."

The Earl of Derwentwater, the great-grandson of King Charles II. by Moll Davies, probably because of his royal descent, first took his trial. Only twenty-six years of age, by all who knew him allowed to be an amiable and generous young man, it is doubtful whether he really intended to rise in armed rebellion against the *de facto* King; certainly, if the anecdote related of him be true, he fully recognised the hopelessness of the task which the conspirators set themselves. When in reply to a question as to the prison in which he and his fellow captives would be confined, he received the answer that all the prisoners would be scattered among the gaols of London, the unfortunate captive sighed deeply and rejoined: " There is one house which would hold us all, and we have a better right to it than anyone else in England."

" Which house is that, my Lord ?" asked the officer of the escorts.

" Bedlam !" replied Derwentwater with a groan.*

Being brought before the House of Lords, the Earls of Derwentwater and Nithsdale, both of whom spoke so lowly that their voices were inaudible, also Lord Widdrington, who declared that gout in the stomach incapacitated him from preparing a defence, practically admitted in their answers that they rose in arms against George, but pleaded that they did so without any direct intention of rebelling; that they rashly took part in a meeting where such a purpose was then put forward for the first time, and that, being thus inadvertently admitted to the design, they found themselves unable to withdraw; finally they threw themselves entirely on His Majesty's clemency, which they had been encouraged to believe would be extended to them.

The Lords Nairne, Carnwath and Kenmure pleaded guilty, and also trusted to the royal mercy.

In a long and pedantic speech the Lord Chancellor, Lord Cowper, sentenced all six peers to the ordinary doom of traitors by hanging, drawing and quartering, holding out a promise that such fate might be mitigated to that of execution by the axe, a pronouncement which caused

* Oldmixon, p. 620; Doran.

immediately, among the many friends of the condemned, a violent agitation for the whole remission of the death penalty.

From the first, the matter of the life or death of these men became with the Whigs a question of political intrigue. " 'Tis a trap laid to undo the Ministry," hysterically cries Lady Cowper, the wife of the Chancellor, while Walpole, in his most truculent manner, declared that he was moved with indignation to see Members of the House of Commons " open their mouths, without blushing, in favour of traitors and parricides." Then with deliberate cruelty he moved the adjournment of the House until March 1, a date later than that fixed for the execution of the delinquent lords, who were condemned to suffer on February 24, thus preventing, so he hoped, any further Parliamentary interference on their behalf.

The motion was carried, the majority being but seven, while in the Upper House a resolution calling on the King to exercise his prerogative of mercy passed in the affirmative by five, a result due largely to the exertions of the Earl of Nottingham, the Lord President of the Council, who demonstrated that the exigencies of party warfare and not the danger to the State prompted a policy of severity.

Such breach of party discipline excited the Ministers to extreme resentment; Townshend and his colleagues immediately induced the King to dismiss Lord Nottingham, his son, his brother and his nephew from all their public employments, and to refuse coldly the address for mercy from the House of Lords, the rejection being couched in such terse and frigid terms as to cause " the Lords that had gone astray the day before, to show plainly by their Looks that they felt they had played the fool,"* as Lady Cowper gleefully remarks.

The petition thus proving nugatory, the wives of the condemned peers strove to soften the heart of King George by their own personal entreaties and tears.

Having persuaded the Dukes of St. Albans and Richmond to introduce them into the royal bedchamber, the Countess of Derwentwater, attended by many ladies of high rank, humbly implored the King to show his " clemency to her unfortunate consort," without, however, in any way moving George to alter his decision.

* " Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 82.

Undeterred by the ill-success of their sister in misfortune, Lady Nithsdale and Lady Nairne, watching an opportunity when the King passed through the corridor at St. James's Palace, cast themselves at his feet, and grasping his coat with imploring hands, piteously besought mercy for their husbands.

Taken completely by surprise, for a moment or so George remained undecided, then, endeavouring to unclasp the hold of the sobbing women, he struggled towards the door of his private apartments dragging the kneeling forms after him, the attendants, at length, freeing him from his undignified position.

To the phlegmatic habits and total absence of courteous address rather than to any innate brutality of nature this behaviour of the King should be ascribed; a Sovereign with any gracious attributes would gladly have seized the opportunity of performing a striking and merciful act of Royal clemency, for George must have been informed of the decision of the Privy Council, despite all constitutional obstacles, to reprieve the culprits with the exception of Lord Derwentwater and Lord Kenmure. If possessed of any acuteness of political instinct, or indeed of any insight into human sympathies, the King surely would have perceived the effect which such an exercise of the Royal grace towards two agonised women would have produced on public opinion, to the direct enhancement of his own reputation and the consequent advantage to his dynasty.

Failing in her desperate efforts to obtain a respite for her husband, Lady Nithsdale, this " deservedly immortal lady," found means to effect his escape from the Tower in female disguise.

By a complicated series of visits to the condemned cell of women coming and returning, exhibiting great variety of feminine figure and habiliments, the devoted wife hoped so to confuse the warders and guards as to render possible, in the dark, the passage among them of her husband, unobserved, dressed as a large, heavily cloaked woman. It is difficult to believe that the elaborate deception could have duped any person unless desirous of being so deceived; indeed, the whole account of the incident leaves the impression that the Tower warders sympathised heartily with the gallant efforts of the loving wife and permitted

the condemned Jacobite to escape, only too glad of a colourable pretext for so doing.

There are two accounts of the manner in which George received the news of this successful flight; one narrative describes him as being greatly enraged, the other as remarking with heavy humour: " It was the best thing a gentleman under such circumstances could do."

Possibly both stories are true; the King's anger might well have been aroused by the renewed fear of treachery among his guards and gaolers, the escape shortly afterwards of Mr. Forster, General Mackintosh and several other conspirators, and the popular acclamation which greeted the fugitives, demonstrating very clearly that the sympathies of a large portion of the nation remained with the defeated Jacobites, and that the allegiance of many in authority lay open to grave suspicion.

Probably from political reasons—Lady Cowper hints at such motives—the Council determined that the Earl of Derwentwater and Viscount Kenmure alone should be executed for high treason, the other lords being reprieved. That the Council found itself in a difficult position is evident. The complete collapse of the rebellion rendered a series of severe examples absolutely unnecessary, but, by the drastic haste with which the Ministers ordered the execution of so many of the lesser participants, they committed themselves to a policy of bloodshedding which would have laid the Government open to a charge of partiality should they have caused the leaders to be respited while so many of the humble followers were left to suffer.

As nominal leader of the Scottish insurgents, the sentence on Lord Kenmure might be justified, but no valid reason can be found for the selection of Lord Derwentwater as a victim, except the determination of the Whigs to exact vengeance, where possible, from one inheriting Stuart blood even in the modified degree attached to the parentage of this unfortunate young man.

The remaining conspirator, Lord Wintoun, after many delays, caused by his pertinacious insistence on the adjournment of his trial until he could produce certain evidence for the defence, eventually took his place at the bar of the House of Lords on March 15.

Conceivably by the advice of his Counsel, Sir Constantine

Phipps, the accused nobleman adopted an attitude of such extravagance as to create a general impression that he was mad.* Lady Cowper, who records her recollection of these events, declares that although he behaved himself in such a manner as persuaded a world of people that he was a natural fool, his real character was that of a "stubborn, illiterate, ill-bred Brute"; and to emphasise the description she adds: "He has eight wives." Surely, if true, cogent evidence that the popular opinion concerning the culprit's mental deficiencies possessed some foundation in fact.†

Reprieved together with the others, after making a futile attempt to escape from the Tower by sawing asunder the bars of the window of his cell with the mainspring of his watch, Lord Wintoun at last contrived to elude the vigilance of his gaolers, and, fleeing to the Continent, died in exile.

By those writers whose object appears to be to place in the most favourable light all the actions of George I. much credit has been given to him for his reputed moderation in exacting vengeance from the culprits who rebelled against his authority, and a strong contrast and many invidious comparisons drawn between the clemency of the Constitutional King and the cruelty of the reigning Stuart who instituted the Bloody Assize and decimated the peasant followers of the hapless Monmouth.

Such praise is totally undeserved.

It is true that George did not indulge in the indiscriminate hangings which so disgraced the reign of James II., and which did much towards alienating allegiance and support from him, but the King, or his advisers, exacted severe penalties from those who took up arms against his crown, and his troops committed furious ravages in the parts of Scotland which they occupied, laying many homes in ruins and many hearts in mourning.

In the whole history of this country, if ever there existed a period when heavy retribution on delinquents might have been anticipated and would have been amply justified, it can be found in the circumstances surrounding the restoration of King Charles II., when the murderers of his father lay prone at his feet and the hour of reckoning had arrived for that act which, in the heart of every Cavalier, cried aloud to high Heaven for vengeance merciless and unrelenting.

* Tindal, vol. vi., p. 549. † "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 98.

Yet the executions of the men who coldly and designedly slew King Charles I. in no way equalled in number the penalties paid by those unfortunates who unsuccessfully, and in many cases unthinkingly, opposed King George I.; and, while the moderation of Charles II. bears eloquent testimony to his truly merciful disposition, the number of sentences, both of death and transportation, inflicted by his Hanoverian successor equally convicts the latter of callous severity.

The selling of freeborn subjects into slavery aroused the bitter resentment of their countrymen, as can be seen in the correspondence of Lockhart and others; but in justice to George it should be said that neither his education nor his previous social surroundings would cause him to view the matter in the same light as his British subjects.

The brutal penalties always inflicted on his German soldiers, as on the troops of all other rulers in Central Europe, the constant and lucrative practice of selling his regiments to any purchaser who might require their services and could afford to buy their blood, would cause him to regard the sale of his delinquent subjects as a suitable and reasonable punishment, not as a ruthless vengeance for their misdeeds.

But this palliation, which certainly applies to the King, in no way exonerates the conduct of his English Ministers; and full as the history of the Whig Party is of corrupt, cruel and arbitrary proceedings, no action tends more to its discredit than the harsh treatment it meted out to those of its fellow-countrymen who dared to oppose the foreign Prince who owed his throne, not to any claim on the affection or fealty of his subjects, but solely to the exigencies of the political situation.

Naturally such severe measures tended to keep alive the national discontent and unrest; the mob showed strong antipathy to the existing Government; rioting and general disorder occurred in many places; the captive Jacobite leaders, Forster, Mackintosh, and several of their fellow-prisoners escaped from confinement, obviously with the approval of the majority of their countrymen, and, what is more significant, contrived to make their escape beyond the seas notwithstanding the multitude of Government spies which infested all parts of the land.

At this time the Whigs found themselves impaled on the horns of a very acute dilemma.

By the Triennial Act the dissolution of Parliament became a necessity in a few months, a catastrophe which greatly exercised the minds of those politicians who knew full well that any appeal to the nation, under the existing circumstances, would result inevitably in the return of many Tories and Jacobites, thus sounding the knell of Whig supremacy.

They solved the difficulty in a characteristic manner.

The Commons, the people's House, had forfeited the confidence of the people, who doubtless would alter its political complexion when they got the opportunity of so doing; therefore, the House itself must, of its own initiative, continue its own existence whether the people wanted it or not.

By the Act of William III. Parliaments were ordained to be triennial; the Whig Ministers determined to make the then existing and all succeeding Parliaments septennial.

In the pretended defence of liberty, in reality for the purpose of ensuring their own enjoyment of place and power, the Whig Ministers of George I. violated every constitutional maxim which previously they professed. Repression of all public feeling, more despotic than ever exercised by a Stuart King, formed the chief item of their administration; a great augmentation of the military forces provided the means of checking the disturbances their tyranny engendered, and finally, when the period of their parliamentary life drew to a close, knowing that the nation they oppressed would inevitably turn against them, the Whig Ministers, throwing all their previously expressed principles to the winds, by Act of Parliament as unconstitutional as it was impudent, gave to the existing and friendly Legislature a renewal of existence which logically they might have extended in like fashion to the Day of Judgment.

The Cabinet dared not risk the introduction of a measure so obviously arbitrary and unprincipled in the Commons, where already their majority showed signs of revolt, but initiated it in the Upper House, an assembly at that time strongly tinged with Whig predilections, hoping, as the chronicler naïvely records, that "if the Bill miscarried with the Lords the odium of this project, which carried a

face of unpopularity, would not rest upon the Commons nor consequently prejudice future elections,"* the latter part of the sentence expressing the inner meaning of the Ministry.

The Duke of Devonshire introduced the Bill in a speech which must have been written for him, "for God had made him a very honest man but no speechmaker." He adduced, as one of the most cogent arguments in its favour, the proposition that triennial Parliaments were productive of much corruption and of most ruinous expense, a statement which movingly appealed to the Whig magnates who derived their ascendancy in the Commons almost exclusively from the representatives of purchased boroughs, the magnitude of whose venality lay in inverse proportion to the paucity of their voters.

This assertion of the Duke stimulated Sir Robert Raymond, a prominent and accomplished lawyer, to the crushing retort that the Bill would be no cure for bribery and corruption, rather it would increase the evil: "An annuity for seven years deserves a better consideration than for three, and those that will give money to get into Parliament will give more for seven than for three years."†

The rank and file of the Whig Party when the proposals first appeared did not "relish them at all." The sarcasms and arguments of the Tories riddled the Bill, raising many fears that its provisions would defeat their own object by arousing overwhelming popular prejudice against them. "If this present Parliament continues beyond the time for which it was chosen," enunciated the Duke of Buckinghamshire, "I know not how to express the manner of its existence, unless, begging leave of that venerable bench," and here His Grace made a sardonic bow to the Bishops, "I have recourse to the distinction used in the Athanasian Creed, for we shall be neither made, nor created, but proceeding."

Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, with all the manifold resources of his eloquent tongue, also "complimented, bantered and lashed the Ministry to a wonderful degree, so that indeed both Whig and Tory wondered at it and all agreed that it was with an infinite degree of wit. An essential part of it was to admire the happiness of this

* Tindal, vol. vii., p. 4.

† "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 355.

free nation which was now to be governed by a standing parliament and a standing army."* So wrote Menzies, an acute and active Jacobite, his description of the effect of the Bill on the rival parties giving a lively picture of the disturbing result of the Ministerial proposals.

"The most remarkable thing was that the Tories talked like the old Whigs and Republicans against Monarchy and Ministers, etc., and the Whigs magnified the advantages of unlimited power and prerogative, vilified the mob, ridiculed the people and exalted the Crown. The Duke of Newcastle built his speech on a pretty odd maxim that, since the King had lost the affection of the people he must rule by the sword. This the Earl of Nottingham took to task as a doctrine new to England and not openly owned at Constantinople itself."†

Truly, as the writer continues, "a strange jumble"; little wonder, therefore, that many faithful Whigs showed signs of becoming recalcitrant, and Mr. Lechmere—a former Solicitor-General in a Whig Administration—announced his intention of opposing the Bill at every stage, a courageous proposition due possibly to the fact that, as a candid friend explained, "Lechmere always damns everything that does not originally come from himself."‡

Political life retains many similar features in every period of national development; Mr. Lechmere, as his career demonstrated, was one of that school of politicians, not confined to the Whig Party or the eighteenth century, who intend by all or any means to reap a full reward for their exertions, even though persistence may supply the place of merit, a course of conduct in the case of Mr. Lechmere eminently successful, as he soon again became an office holder and eventually died a peer.

Yet notwithstanding the strong and genuine feeling against the Bill it passed the House of Commons by a majority of two to one; an event easily accounted for by the fact that in the list of the 284 Members who voted in favour of the measure no less than 122 held office under the Government; the one principle of the Whig Party, which then and afterwards became immutable, being the fundamental rule that the first duty of a Whig Minister

* "Stuart Papers," vol. ii., p. 131. † *Ibid.*, p. 122.
‡ Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 62.

was to provide comfortable sinecures for his family and dependants, generally numerous, frequently impecunious and invariably voracious.

It is, however, but just and fair to allow that this Act which lengthened the prescribed life of Parliament produced, almost immediately, two results beneficial to the nation.

It reduced the power of the autocratic oligarchy which then ruled the House of Lords; in the words of Speaker Onslow: "formed the era of emancipation of the British House of Commons from its former dependence on the Crown and the House of Lords," by freeing the Members of the elected Legislature from the constant fear of the loss of their seats, then greatly under the influence of ministerial and noble patrons.

In the second place, by increasing the stability of the Legislature, it enabled Parliament, no longer doubtful of continuous public support, to assume a firmer and more independent attitude towards foreign nations.

The prolongation of the duration of Parliament, a fair subject of discussion at any time, proved, as events showed, of distinct advantage to the nation, but the arbitrary extension of one special Parliament for the benefit solely of a political party and without giving the electorate any opportunity of expressing its opinion was, as the biographer of Walpole is forced to admit, "undoubtedly one of the most daring uses, or, according to the representations of its opponents, abuses of parliamentary power that ever was committed since the Revolution; for it not only lengthened the duration of future parliaments, but Members who had been elected for only three years prolonged, of their own authority, the term of their continuance for four years more."

Freed by the repeal of the Triennial Act from one embarrassment, Ministers found themselves immediately faced by another dilemma.

King George never made a pretence of attachment to his British subjects or of any desire to reside among them. He preferred Hanover. Its Court, its pleasures, especially its autocratic government, appeared to him to be far superior and more agreeable to his taste than any British institutions, excepting always the Royal Civil List.

Notwithstanding the urgent solicitations of his Ministers, who impressed on him that at this juncture his absence from England would be highly prejudicial to his own interests, George flatly refused to be any longer detained—"confined" being his own expression—in this country, and announced his intention of departing for Hanover so soon as the Government could take the necessary steps.

Two obstacles impeded his desire: the clause in the Act of Settlement, forbidding the Monarch to leave England without the permission of Parliament, and the dislike, almost amounting to hatred, which the King displayed towards his only son, who, in event of the departure of the Sovereign, by all precedents, would be appointed Regent.

With regard to the first of these impediments little difficulty need be feared, the permission of the House of Commons, in its existing temper, being certain, the Ministers obsequious, and the Government so anxious to stand well in the royal good graces as to contemplate the complete repeal of the obnoxious clause, in order to shield His Majesty from the annoyance of repeated applications to Parliament for the indulgence of his wishes.

Their estimation of the temper of the Legislature was correct.

The revocation of the clause met with little opposition; the Whigs were servile, the Tories delighted that the Monarch should so soon open the eyes of the nation to the small regard he entertained for the people he ostensibly ruled.

The Bill passed the House without serious opposition; but the next question, the nomination of a Regency, presented far graver problems.

Not content with uttering strong objections to the appointment of the Prince of Wales as sole Regent, in accordance with established usage, George directly interfered with the management of his son's household, sending him a peremptory notice to dismiss from his service the Duke of Argyll and his brother, the Earl of Islay.

Probably this suggestion primarily emanated from certain of the Ministers, always jealous of the strong influence which the Duke, his family and his connections, exercised, not only over the Heir Apparent individually, but also over the whole course of Scottish administration.

That the King gladly seized the opportunity of "humbling

the Prince is certain";* rumour even repeating that His Majesty contemplated appointing his younger brother, Duke Ernest Augustus, to the highest office in the realm, the Sovereign being absent.

For a time the Prince of Wales remained obdurate; his august father thereupon sent him a peremptory letter, "smacking of the style of Robethon," so Lady Cowper thought, containing direct orders "at once to put a stop to all this and fulfil the proposition which Monsieur Bernsdorff has made to you on my part."†

The paternal admonition failed in effect; Ministers, very fearful of the consequences should the family quarrel become accentuated, pressed their advice upon the Prince, who at length yielded, obeyed the royal commands, and discharged the Duke of Argyll and his brother Archibald, Earl of Islay, from his household; to further emphasise the disgrace, the King himself dismissed the former nobleman from all his varied and most profitable employments.

Not content with thus impairing the dignity of his heir, George refused to create the Prince of Wales Regent, thinking fit to revive a lesser title, unknown to England since the time of Edward the Black Prince, that of Guardian and Lieutenant of the Realm, making also such appointments in the Government as might still further effectually curtail the delegated power.

In accordance with popular rumour the King, before his departure, raised his brother, Ernest Augustus, to the peerage of England by the title of Duke of York, and conferred the Order of the Garter on Prince Frederick, his grandson, who remained in Hanover for his education.

Having thus provided for his legitimate connections, His Majesty proceeded to plant upon the peerage of Ireland his favourite mistress, Ermengarda Melusina von Schulenberg, who thus became Duchess of Munster; at the same time Sir Henry St. John, father of Lord Bolingbroke, obtained the title of Viscount St. John, in recognition of his steadfast adherence to Whig measures and as some solace for the disgrace of his illustrious son.

Certain changes also were made in the Ministry, Paul Methuen, who had done good service as ambassador to Spain, being appointed, "most unaccountably," Secretary

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 108. † *Ibid.*, p. 192.

of State *pro tem.*, in the place of Stanhope, numbered among the household which attended the King abroad.

On July 7 George started on his journey. For the purpose of calming public opinion the Prince of Wales accompanied him, riding in the royal coach as far as the Tower, whence the King travelled alone by barge to Gravesend, embarking there on the yacht *Caroline*.

Once more the frigid self-obsession of George, and his complete ignorance of the customs and idiosyncrasies of the country he ruled, operated to his disadvantage in the eyes of his subjects. Whilst driving to the Tower the royal procession met a band of prisoners lately sentenced to death for participation in the Jacobite rising. To have seized the opportunity of observing an old custom, that the royal face always carried mercy, and thus pardoning the wretched men at once, would have conduced enormously to the King's popularity; but, for the second time, George failed to avail himself of the happy chance; he passed onward without a sign of recognition amid the execrations of the prisoners and the murmurs of the mob.

As before, the King's callous demeanour proceeded from his cold, self-centred manner and not from severity of disposition, this being demonstrated by the announcement made a few days later of a reprieve for twenty-four of the condemned men, John Hall and William Paul alone being left for execution. They were hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn, the dying speech of Paul, a clergyman of the Church of England, being so touching as, in the opinion of an onlooker, to attract more converts to the Jacobite cause than his horrible death deterred traitors.*

Landing safely in Holland, George made all speed to his beloved Hanover, travelling very fast, possibly because of the many rumours prevalent that attempts would be made against his person. Mr. Stanhope and Lord Dorset accompanied the King in his *berlin*, his German Ministers and attendants following in other carriages.

Six days after his departure from London he arrived at Hanover, and immediately set out again for Pyrmont, the favourite Spa of the Brunswick Dukes, the strength of the waters and the drastic course of treatment there pursued being considered highly beneficial for those suffering from excess in the pleasures of the table or in kindred indulgences.

* *Political Mercury*, 1716, p. 313.

CHAPTER XI

HANOVER ANNEXES ENGLAND

At home in his German dominions, freed from the uncongenial atmosphere of British surroundings and untrammelled by the scruples of his British Ministers, George devoted himself entirely to completing the settlement of certain questions closely connected with the aggrandisement of his Electoral territories, but which in no way equally concerned the welfare of Great Britain.

In the light of recent events the condition of Central Europe at this period of history should provide a useful lesson.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century two dominant personalities added their individual colours to the complexion of international affairs in the northern parts of Europe.

Pre-eminent stood Charles XII. of Sweden, a curious survival of mediæval times, a military knight-errant, self-styled champion of the Protestant faith, who felt perfect contentment so long as he was fighting, no matter where, no matter whom; then, Peter, Czar of Russia, bent on welding his unwieldy and disturbed realm into a concrete state, unmindful in the process over whom he trampled so long as he swept all obstacles from his destined path.

The provinces in the northern parts of Germany gained by Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years War, the acquisition of which raised Sweden to the first rank among European powers, were ardently coveted by all those rulers whose territories lay in adjacent parts of Europe, and who now hoped that the advent to the Swedish throne of a callow youth would afford them a very favourable opportunity of attaining the object of their desires.

When Charles XI. of Sweden initiated the so-called reunion—euphemistic term for the confiscation of two-thirds of the property of his nobles—the Livonian magnates, but lately brought under Swedish dominion, violently

resented the action. Led by Landrath von Budberg and John Reinhold Patkul, they laid their grievances before the King. On his refusal to alter the projected scheme, Patkul, a restless intriguer of great mental acquirements, renounced his allegiance and, after many vicissitudes, entered the service of Frederick Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, instigating that ruler to commence a campaign for the division of the Swedish territories now under the sway of the youthful Charles XII., thus setting fire to a train of warfare which soon spread over the greater part of Europe.

But the luxurious and immoral Augustus, though ready enough to add to his territorial possessions, found himself no match for the young monarch, a very warlike paladin who, gaining a series of victories culminating in that of Frauenstadt, not only defeated his opponent but actually deposed him from the throne of Poland, setting up in his place one Stanislaus Leszczynski, a scion of an old Polish family, though a mere political nonentity, remarkable alone for the fact that he, fortuitously, became the father-in-law of Louis XV. of France.

Despite his many victories over the Poles, Charles found a doughty antagonist in Peter of Russia, a marked contrast to Augustus, always more fortunate in love than in war. Peter, though no favourite with European Courts, his amours being patent and promiscuous and his behaviour unconventional—he habitually used his fingers indiscriminately as a fork or a pocket-handkerchief—yet possessed the essential qualities of a conqueror: undaunted courage, great tenacity of purpose and clear, definite designs.

Determined to gain access to the sea—the provinces on the eastern side of the Baltic, even the site upon which Petersburg was built, being at that period a portion of the Swedish dominions—Peter persistently pursued his course. No defeat caused him to falter, no difficulties turned him from his ultimate purpose, until his troops, trained by reverses and hardships, heavily defeated the Swedes at Pultava and drove their adventurous leader, Charles, in headlong flight to Turkey, still buoyed up, even in the midst of this new disaster, by the hopes of obtaining help from the Sultan, an inveterate foe equally of the Muscovite, the Austrian Emperor and the German Confederacy.

The effect on contemporary opinion created by Peter's achievement is shown by the testimony of a writer in a monthly journal devoted to the Whig Party, where it is declared: "The great things he has already done will scarce be credited by posterity; if we consider what a mean figure Muscovy made in the world when that prince came to the throne and what figure it makes now, we must needs look upon the Czar not only as the legislator but likewise as the founder of a new Empire";* an empire which, as subsequent events demonstrated, would, if Peter had always found a worthy successor, seriously have modified the future of Eastern and Middle Europe, but which, now forlorn, ruined, shattered for generations to come, can only live in hopes of rising from its ashes.

In 1712, Peter the Czar, Frederick William of Prussia and Frederick IV. of Denmark, drawn together by the common tie of territorial greed, combined for the purpose of dividing among themselves all the Swedish possessions which abutted on the southern shores of the Baltic Sea. While the Prussian forces seized Stettin, the Danish monarch overran the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, occupying also the Duchy of Bremen and the principality of Verden, which by the Peace of Westphalia had been accorded to Sweden, much to the disgust of the Princes of North Germany.

For many years George, the Elector of Hanover, cast longing eyes on these demesnes, the acquisition of which would give him control of the mouths of the two great German rivers, the Elbe and the Weser.

He possessed neither hereditary right nor greater national claims to these lands than any other of his neighbours; the inhabitants, so far as they could express their opinions, showed no special desire to be annexed by a ruler who, though in no respects tyrannical, yet regarded his subjects chiefly as so much material for regiments which could be hired out at a profit to any monarch or prince who might require their services and—important consideration—could afford to pay for them.

To the eyes of George these Duchies held great attraction; that Great Britain should participate in winning them for him appeared to his self-centred nature as undeniably

* *Political Mercury*, 1717, p. 6.

right and reasonable; that English Ministers, seeing the manifold objections to such a course, from the insular point of view, should advocate abstention, drove him into paroxysms of wrath. Not only Sweden, the actual owner of the coveted land, but Denmark, which also ardently longed to occupy it, became an object of enmity and suspicion to the King-Elector, which jealous feeling grew more accentuated when the combined forces of Russians, Prussians and Danes made a successful foray into these Swedish dominions.

Assisted by troops sent by Augustus of Saxony, the Danish monarch, in 1713, took possession of the greater part of the Duchy of Bremen and overran the principality of the Duke of Holstein Gottorp, who promptly turned for aid to Hanover.

Nothing loth, George, then only Elector of Brunswick, immediately for his own benefit occupied the Bishopric of Verden and some small places on the borders of Bremen, by this decisive action demonstrating to Denmark that he, the Elector, did not intend to acquiesce supinely in any Danish aggression on the mutually desired territories, though, at the same time, he implied his readiness to join the coalition against Sweden, and actually sent a contingent of Hanoverian soldiers to serve with the allied forces in Pomerania.

The attempted arrangement with Denmark bore no immediate result, the special scheme of spoliation proposed by George not finding favour in the eyes of the other confederates, but the Hanoverian troops remained in possession of the occupied territory, and the Elector showed by all his measures his determination to maintain the annexation.

Suddenly an event occurred which threatened to subvert the designs of the predatory powers. Charles of Sweden mysteriously returned and threw himself into his fortress city of Stralsund.

A true knight-errant in disposition, attuned to the twelfth century, incongruous in the eighteenth, he, in his whole romantic life, performed no more romantic feat than this headlong ride across the continent of Europe, travelling more than 1,200 miles in fourteen days, never resting until he reached Stralsund before his subjects were

aware of his departure from Bender, his legs and feet so affected by hard travel that the services of a surgeon became necessary to cut the boots from his swollen limbs.

The Allies long dreaded the return of the wanderer, there being, in the opinion of Lord Stair, an experienced General, nothing to hinder him marching into the heart of the Empire.* The bare thought, therefore, that he might reappear among his native troops rendered Frederick of Denmark so apprehensive that he displayed a more reasonable attitude towards the demands of Hanover,† the actual appearance of the warlike Swedish King prompting the Danish monarch immediately to take the necessary steps for yielding up the coveted domains on receiving a promise from the Hanoverian Elector that he would declare war against the Swedish enemy and pay a substantial subsidy to the Danish exchequer.

In pursuance of this agreement the Estates of both Duchies, being absolved from their oath of allegiance to the King of Denmark, swore fidelity at Stade on October 15, 1715, to George, who by that time had ascended the throne of Great Britain, the Hanoverian troops at once entering and taking possession of the town. On the very same day George, as Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg, declared war against Sweden, and published a manifesto of the reasons which urged him to take this course.

This action at once emphasised the anomalies and exposed the weakness incidental to a dual system of government, the titular head of which exercised authority simultaneously over two countries, each controlled by a separate executive, each governed by a system incompatible one with the other, each swayed by interests diametrically antagonistic.

A declaration of war made on his own initiative by the Elector of Hanover lay well within the scope of his powers, which practically were those of an autocrat; the same exercise of prerogative by the constitutional ruler of England, without the consent or even the knowledge of Parliament, effected a breach of the Constitution and destroyed the whole purpose of the changes wrought by the Revolution.

* "Townshend Papers," Historical MSS., p. 62.
† "Hanover Papers," B.M. MSS., vol. 227, No. 479.

George, it is true, in his capacity of King of England, never attempted or even contemplated such a course of action; but although, theoretically, Great Britain in no way participated in the original declaration of hostilities, yet, from the first, the complications which this entirely anomalous and illogical position created produced an effect highly detrimental to national interests, and also proved extremely embarrassing to the prestige and prosperity of the United Kingdom.

The trenchant words of Bolingbroke exactly reproduce the situation: "This entanglement became the first link of a political chain by which this country was dragged back into new and expensive broils"; while the proclamation of James Stuart issued on the same occasion, and in which, perhaps, again may be traced the pen of the eloquent Secretary, exactly describes the situation as affecting the people of England: "While the principal powers engaged in the last war enjoy the blessing of peace and are attentive to discharge their debts and ease their people, Great Britain, in the midst of peace, feels all the load of war, new debts are contracted, new armies are raised at home. Dutch troops are brought into the kingdom, and by taking possession of the Duchy of Bremen, in violation of the public faith, a door is open to let in an inundation of foreigners from abroad and reduce these nations to a state of dependence on one of the most inconsiderable provinces of the Empire."*

Previous to this time relations between Sweden and Great Britain continued most amicable; in 1714, on the death of Queen Anne, King Charles sent a friendly message expressing his condolence on the death of one monarch and his polite congratulations on the accession of the other. Indeed, friendship with Sweden undoubtedly contributed in all directions to the prosperity of English trade, and more, for as may be gathered from the despatches of Lord Townshend, the British Navy mainly depended upon the Baltic supply for its necessary stores.† An English squadron, under Sir John Norris, sailed for the Swedish coast in 1714, for the purpose, in conjunction with the Dutch, of protecting the interests of the legitimate com-

* R.O. George I., Domestic, Bundle 1.
† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 88.

PETER THE GREAT OF RUSSIA.

merce of both Great Britain and Holland, but in 1715, though no declaration of war was made, there are indications that King George intimated to his allies that in certain events stronger measures would be taken so that the British seaman might become a potent adjunct to the Hanoverian trooper.

And, indeed, the pressure of Norris and his squadron, even without the formal declaration of war, fulfilled to a certain extent the promise of the King-Elector, for, by the prevention of succours reaching Stralsund and the Isle of Rügen, the Swedish forces became so debilitated that the latter strong place fell on November 9, 1715, after a sanguinary battle in which the King of Sweden, himself wounded, lost the greater part of his army; and the former fortress surrendered with all its garrison on Christmas Day of the same year.

Yet, though George, for the sake of increasing his Hanoverian dominions, came perilously near to an open quarrel with a power long friendly and well-disposed towards England, his relations with his European allies in no way stood upon a satisfactory footing.

Both the Czar and the King of Prussia disliked him personally, and bore no love to his Hanoverian subjects; feelings completely reciprocated by the King of Great Britain, who hated both his royal colleagues with the full force of his own unamiable disposition.

As early as October, 1714, but a few months after his accession, doubts as to the satisfactory nature of the European position seem to have perturbed the minds of both the King and his Ministers. The fear of Louis XIV., old, decrepit and defeated though he might be, still pervaded his former antagonists and drove the English Government, in a fit of nervous depression, to despatch Stanhope in hot haste, accompanied by Sir Richard Temple, soon to be created Lord Cobham, to Vienna, to endeavour to infuse life into the dry bones of the Grand Alliance.

But the situation had changed. The States-General of Holland held no friendly feelings towards the Empire, the question of the Barrier Treaty in the Netherlands continually being a thorn in the side of the United Provinces; while the Emperor, on his part, was "fort irrité contre les

Hollandais et fort outré de leur dernière proposition."* Not even the intimation that Great Britain would regard with friendly eyes an Austrian expansion in Italy could produce any immediate results, although Charles VI. expressed some small desire for an amicable arrangement with this country.

But later, in February, 1715, Holland assumed a different attitude; her rulers, conscious that their country rapidly waned in political value, readily signed a new agreement with Great Britain, stipulating that each Power should intervene on behalf of the other if subjected to armed aggression, this proviso being a secret article of a new convention confirming all previous treaties.

Satisfactory, to a limited degree, as these arrangements might be, yet the prospect on the shores of the Baltic could in no way be regarded as reassuring, for, in addition to the warlike operations of Charles, the behaviour of Peter the Czar caused considerable perturbation both to the Elector of Hanover and to others of the North German rulers.

Charles Leopold, Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, during the operations against Sweden, having by his own fiat divorced his wife—an efficient manner of avoiding the delays of legal procedure—married at Danzig a niece of the Czar, the daughter of his elder brother Ivan. Peter himself and the Czarina honoured the ceremony with their presence, and, when difficulties arose concerning the quartering of the contingent of Russian troops destined to assist Denmark in an invasion of Sweden, turned a willing ear to the invitation of his nephew by marriage that the Muscovite infantry should be billeted on the inhabitants of Mecklenburg.

Though highly convenient to the Czar of Russia, this arrangement raised many fears in the hearts of the neighbouring Teuton princes, who specially dreaded lest the erratic Duke should be persuaded to relinquish his Duchy to his Calmuck connection and accept some other appanage in compensation, thus giving to the Muscovite a foothold on German soil.

Being greatly under the influence of his German Ministers and trusting but little to the Members of the British Government, obsequious as they might be, George became

* Stanhope, vol. i., Appendix, p. xlv.

so exasperated by the alleged designs and actual proceedings of the Czar that, instigated by Bernsdorff, himself a landowner in Mecklenburg, the Constitutional King of Great Britain veritably contemplated making a surreptitious foray upon the forces of his ostensible ally, the Czar of Russia, securing his ships and seizing his person; a scheme so outrageous in inception and so eminently calculated to involve England anew in a great European war as to deter even Stanhope, by this time enmeshed entirely in the plans of the King-Elector and his German councillors, the extent of the enthralment of the English Minister being demonstrated by his semi-apology: "I will check my own nature upon this occasion which was ever inclined to bold strokes."*

It is possible that George and his advisers may have been partially cognisant of the designs instilled into Charles of Sweden by his talented and ambitious Chancellor, Görtz, a statesman of wide aspirations and great knowledge, whose influence over his erratic master became so strong as to inspire the remark "that Charles was just such a master as the Baron wanted, and he was just such a minister as was necessary for the King."†

These deep purposes took the form of an intended alliance, offensive and defensive, between Sweden and Russia, a policy which, if effected, would have given these two powers complete sovereignty over all the Baltic Sea.

Thus threatened with a war by the two aspiring northern potentates, knowing full well the weakness of Holland and the impotence of the Empire, George, in default of other allies, turned to France, the only great power who viewed with indifference his designs upon Bremen and Verden.

The idea of such a reconciliation between these nations, so long antagonistic one to the other, sprang originally from the new ruler of France, the Regent, Philip, Duke of Orleans.‡

There were many reasons why George should strive to ally himself with the hereditary foe of Great Britain;§

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 84.

† Pollnitz, vol. i., p. 55.

‡ Wiesener, "Le Regent, L'Abbé Dubois et les Anglais," vol. i., p. 9.

§ Stair's "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 394; "Sevelinges" (Cardinal Dubois), vol. i., p. 164.

there were equally cogent arguments why the Regent should desire such an agreement and should exert himself to facilitate its execution.

Small justice has been accorded by posterity to Philip, the Regent.

He served France well during the period of his power, and did much to assist her in recovering from the misery and debility which followed the long wars of Louis Quatorze. The enemies of Philip have made the most of his many defects and his deliberate debauchery; they have not scrupled to accuse him of premeditating the murder of his nephew, the little King Louis XV., an act manifestly foreign to his nature, for with all his vices he possessed a kind heart and a sense of right-mindedness; as a witty Frenchman has observed: "He would have been virtuous, could anyone be virtuous without principle."*

Though to accuse him of any thought of murdering the little King is unjust, yet, regarding the delicate health of the boy, he well might remember that, though he himself stood next in succession to the glorious heritage of the throne of France, he only did so through the renunciation of Philip of Anjou, King of Spain, the legitimate successor, and that the wise Minister, de Torcy, had uttered a grave warning that no personal renunciation could divest the lineal heir to the French crown of his just rights should he desire to enforce them.

Under these circumstances Philip, though possessing no strong attachment to any member of his mother's family—she being the daughter of the Elector Palatine and the favourite niece of the Electress Sophia—and least of all to George, the object of that mother's heartiest detestation, yet plainly saw that his own position would be greatly strengthened by a union between himself and his cousin, the new King of Great Britain, by which each, in case of need, guaranteed to support the other in his enjoyment of the actual succession.

Some such design had been broached to the English Government by Lord Stair, its envoy at the French Court, to whom French writers attribute the idea.† The British Ministry, however, at that time expressed an opinion that it would be well for France to show some practical proof

* Duclos, "Mémoires Secrètes," vol. i., p. 208. † *Ibid.*, p. 236.

of friendly disposition before any such advances could be entertained.

Now, with the fear of the Northern war before their eyes, Stanhope and his colleagues yielded to the pressure of the Hanoverian Junto and consented to reopen negotiations with the Regent, who, on his part, showed greater willingness to co-operate, as he conjectured that Alberoni, the astute Minister of Spain, himself projected some closer connection between the Spanish Bourbons and the Court of England.

Obstacles, it is true, stood in the way, not the least of which being the disposition of the British Ambassador, Lord Stair, to whom the Regent evinced no partiality whatsoever and, at times, even distinct dislike. Stair's Scottish haughtiness irritated the susceptibilities of the French: "He carries his nose in the air with an aspect of extreme insolence," writes St. Simon, who further states that the Scotsman pressed so heavily upon the natural gentleness of the French statesman, de Torcy, that at length that able diplomatist would no longer have any dealings with him.*

The English Government, owing to these embarrassments, chose the Hague as the place in which to renew their diplomatic conversations.

The British Ministry may have mistrusted its own agent in Paris; Philip assuredly entertained exactly the same feelings towards his envoy to the States-General, the Marquis de Chateauneuf, and thereupon deputed the Abbé Dubois, who, in the scandalous chronicles of the day, shared the record of his master's profligate excesses, to conduct the somewhat delicate preliminaries.

Venal, probably; unscrupulous, indubitably, Guillaume Dubois possessed so great ability as to draw an acknowledgment of his attainments even from the old Duchess of Orleans, who, however, characteristically qualifies her praise by declaring: "But he is false and selfish as the devil, he resembles a young fox, you can see the falsehood in his eyes."†

The gay world of Paris believed that Madame felt but small affection for the Abbé, who, so it was bruited, owed

* St. Simon, "Memoirs," vol. xii., p. 128.

† "Duchesse d'Orléans' Lettres" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 281.

his promotion to Louis XIV., the great King desiring to have about the person of his nephew, easily influenced by surroundings, a confidant sufficiently adroit to act as a capable conduit pipe for royal suggestions, more especially with regard to the marriage of Madame's son with Mademoiselle de Blois, the King's natural daughter, an alliance calculated to give a great shock, though not the first in the same direction, to the family pride of the Guelphs.

The Abbé was poor. To provide the means of living the kingly bounty proposed to confer on the useful satellite the Abbey of St. Just, a purpose which drew a strong remonstrance from the saintly confessor of Le Grand Monarque, le Père la Chaise: " Sire, Dubois is totally unfitted for any ecclesiastical preferment, he is gravely addicted to women, to wine and to gambling !"

" Perhaps so," rejoined the King; " but he never is compromised, he never is drunk, and he never is the loser."

Doubtless this story is apocryphal, Louis Quatorze being too deeply conscious of his own magnificence ever to be epigrammatic, but certainly he entertained a good opinion of the talents of Dubois; and his nephew, Philip, when he succeeded to the Regency, also placed great confidence and reliance on the astuteness of the Abbé.

Part of the paraphernalia of diplomacy in those days consisted in elaborate secret preparations, generally well known, however, to the opposing parties, owing to the equally elaborate system of espionage considered necessary in all Government departments. Dubois, for the purpose of intercepting Stanhope on his journey to Hanover, departed for the Hague in the assumed character of a dealer in articles *de vertu*, on this occasion books and pictures, his previous experience having given him little insight into the feminine attribute of the same name.

His disguise, nevertheless, does not seem to have been sufficient to have prevented an English monthly newspaper of the period from relating that the " Abbot du Bois, a secret agent of the Duke Regent of France, and formerly his preceptor, was the Person who endeavoured to speak with the King of Great Britain on his landing at Maesland Sluys and who, failing in that design, spoke and gave a letter to Mr. Secretary Stanhope."*

* *Political Mercury*, July, 1716.

Stanhope and Dubois were old friends; neither practised the life of an anchorite, and their intimacy on convivial occasions set a precedent they found it convenient to follow during the course of the secret negotiations.*

One of the chief difficulties to be surmounted lay in the claim of the French Court that the British Government should ratify the provisions of the Treaty of Utrecht and base the new agreement on that document.

Since the accession of George, the Whig Party never ceased denouncing their political opponents for having effected this particular treaty. At the identical moment of these interviews, by a resolution of Parliament proposed and enforced by Whig Ministers, the Tory ex-Treasurer, Lord Oxford, ostensibly responsible for the negotiations, lay a prisoner in the Tower under an impeachment for being the author of the very same instrument upon which the Whig Government itself was proposing to found a new alliance.

Such a situation would have proved embarrassing to most politicians who professed to be guided by principle; to the Whigs of the Hanoverian Succession these incidents simply presented inconvenient episodes; as Walpole frequently demonstrated during his career, political consistency to the Whig mind meant an undeviating adherence to that course of conduct which tended to assure the consistent stability of the Whig in office.

After much discussion and some threats by the Abbé of instant departure unless a conciliatory spirit was shown, Stanhope drafted a clause whereby Great Britain, France and Holland guaranteed all and every article of the Treaty of Utrecht, so far as they concerned the interests of the three powers only, and the succession to the French and British crowns. In return Dubois yielded the items, all-important to the British Ministers, the expulsion of the Pretender from French soil, the denial of the right of asylum to his chief adherents, and the demolition of the new port and canal at Mardycke,† which Louis XIV., acting on the letter rather than the spirit of the Treaty, caused to be constructed in the place of the harbour at Dunkirk, the destruction of which was specially stipulated and had been already partially accomplished.

* Wiesener, vol. i., p. 286.
† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., pp. 68-72.

Occurrences in other parts of the Continent conduced to this amicable spirit. The victory of the Emperor over the Turks at Belgrade, August, 1717, produced so great a change in the aspect of affairs in Europe as to render France very desirous of bringing about a good understanding with England. Dubois therefore used all his diplomatic talents to effect a happy result, for, as Stanhope anticipated, the instructions the Abbé received from his superiors were full of "Le douceur d'onction et d'accommodement,"* and the soothing application of these qualities, combined with a reasonable indulgence in Stanhope's hospitality, so facilitated the transaction of business that the preliminaries were settled in a few days, a miracle of despatch in that age of prolix negotiation.†

After a short stay at the Hague, King George and his entourage, German and English, continued on their way to Herrenhausen. Here in their native country the Hanoverian Ministers resumed complete sway over the King, to which Stanhope gave but feeble and half-hearted resistance; consequently the aims and interests of the Electorate in all matters took precedence of those of Great Britain.

This condition of affairs did not tend to facilitate the negotiations, and when the Abbé arrived at Hanover, on August 19, and prepared to resume the conference, he found that matters hardly progressed with the same ease and celerity as had attended the discussion of the preliminaries.

The Treaty, in truth, commended itself to the bulk of neither the French nor the English people; the former deeply resented the conditions concerning the Stuart Prince and the demolition of Dunkirk, regarding both as a slight on the memory of the late King Louis; while the latter felt no desire to live on terms of closer friendship with their Gallic neighbours, and feared that the consummation of this alliance might lead to greater acts of hostility against the northern powers, towards whom, hitherto, they entertained the most friendly feelings. Indeed, this latter fear powerfully operated on some individual members of the British Ministry, who, though favourably inclined to the most amicable relations with France, yet greatly dreaded any extension of operations on the shores of the Baltic.

* "Hanover Papers," B.M. MSS., vol. viii., No. 32.
† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 72.

Charles XII. having effected his escape from Stralsund, with his usual fiery energy projected, by way of reprisal, an invasion of Norway, at that time a portion of the Danish dominions. To supplement the feeble efforts of the Danes in defence of their territories, a scheme was evolved for an expedition into Schonen, the southernmost portion of the Norwegian peninsula, to which the Czar should contribute the major portion of the troops.

Peter, however, refused to make this descent, alleging as an excuse that the season was too far advanced for such operations, thus offering no opposition to the plans of the Swedish King, who, as the Czar's Scottish physician, Erskine, a confirmed Jacobite, cheerfully observes, " will thus make himself master of Norway and so play the devil among them."*

To George the decision of the Czar caused the greatest annoyance and anger, for the continued occupation of the neighbouring Duchy of Mecklenburg by the Russians constituted a grave menace to his own German dominions. Personally disliking Peter, who in return " hated him like the devil," his feelings were constantly inflamed by the counsels of Bernsdorff, " that mischievous old man, so confined in his ideas to his own Mecklenburg and his three villages that the credit and security of all Europe is not able to rouse him."†

To those English Ministers who remained at home in Great Britain, and consequently only heard vicariously of the trend of events, the position of affairs on the Continent caused the deepest uneasiness. For some time back the relations between the British Government and the Hanoverian Junto grew much strained. Allusions to the " infamous projects of Bothmar, who always has on foot some scheme to get money," the " impertinences " of Robethon, the general iniquity of Bernsdorff and the other German councillors constantly occur in the letters of Townshend, while Walpole with characteristic bluntness writes: " We are almost lost with the King, having all the foreigners against us."‡

Four English statesmen held the reins of power in Great Britain during the first years of the rule of King George.

* " Stuart Papers," vol. iii., p. 133.
† Stanhope, vol. i., Appendix, p. lxxvi.
‡ Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 61.

Of these one only, Robert Walpole, can claim a place among the great Ministers who have governed these islands; the other three, Lord Townshend, Lord Stanhope and Lord Sunderland, though personally far removed from mediocrity, yet in no wise can aspire to hold a higher record than that of capable administrators and experienced politicians.

At the commencement of the reign Townshend filled the important office of Secretary of State, and to a certain extent acted as First Minister, more by virtue of the importance of the duties he performed than of the ascendancy he exercised over his colleagues. A man of moderate ability, stronger in temper than in talents, obstinate in disposition and consequently narrow in views, he nevertheless possessed two qualities denied to the majority of his coadjutors, being of high and unsullied honour, retaining a character of unblemished honesty amid surroundings which reeked of venality and corruption. But though respectable and respected as a man, he failed in every particular as a Minister. Detesting the German influence about the person of the King, he acted so maladroitly that, while arousing the enmity of the Hanoverian courtiers and consequently alienating the confidence of the Sovereign, he yet yielded to policy and embarked on enterprises which he disliked and reprobated.

Anxious to retain power, intolerant of competition, for the purpose of maintaining his personal position he sacrificed his confirmed convictions, and then salved his conscience by administering in a perfunctory manner that policy which, if he could have followed his own predilections, he would have rejected from the first. Suspicious and jealous of his more talented colleague, Walpole, he so conducted affairs as to forfeit the support of that able Parliamentarian, eventually being so far eclipsed by the conspicuous attributes of the latter as to be left with no alternative but retirement from public life. Accepting the inevitable with dignity and equanimity, Lord Townshend devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, advocated an enlightened system of farming and, by inculcating the cultivation of roots, gained for himself the name of Turnip Townshend, thus signalising an achievement which conferred on the nation infinitely greater benefits than at any time resulted from his more ambitious endeavours in the field of imperial politics.

His close ally and most prominent colleague, Robert Walpole, but commenced his responsible ministerial career in the initial years of King George's reign, though his undoubted aptitude for Parliamentary management soon gained for him considerable influence in the House of Commons. On the achievements of his later period it is not necessary to expatiate, but, from the earliest appearance of Walpole in the political arena, it can plainly be seen that he owed his influence over others largely to the possession of a nature uniquely in concord with the atmosphere of the times. A gross, sensual, foul-mouthed and foul-minded man, living in an age strongly marked with like characteristics, he won the confidence and favour of a class addicted to the same life, pursuing the same objects, practising the same vices as himself, men who, if they would not actually have resented, yet would certainly have been repelled by any public profession or practice of a higher moral and social standard than that in which they lived, and which sufficed for all their intellectual and moral aspirations.

Though practising business habits, Walpole always opened his gamekeeper's letters before plunging into the business of the State. This incident aptly illustrates the attitude he adopted towards political affairs, that of displaying the disposition of a bluff, English country gentleman with no liking or sympathy towards strange ways or alien manners, a reputation which greatly commended him to the bulk of his fellow-countrymen, who long had abominated the enrichment of Dutch favourites by the grant of Crown lands and the imposition on the Legislature of foreign notables by the bestowal of English peerages; who, moreover, as von Pollnitz declared, very sincerely disliked the Hanoverian followers of the King, "having a notion that the money of England goes over to Germany."*

While thus gaining popularity by a display of his insular predilections, Walpole soon found a field for the exhibition of higher qualities, his business acumen, financial ability and general moderation and common sense being exactly the faculties which the exigencies of the moment demanded and the bulk of the nation desired in their rulers, which, moreover, were conspicuous by their absence in the character of his colleagues.

* Pollnitz, "Memoirs," vol. iv., p. 251.

For to these individual traits the nature and disposition of Stanhope formed a complete antithesis. Impetuous and fiery by nature, ever prone to "hectoring" those with whom he dealt, never permitting any liberal consideration for the principles or prejudices of others to sway him from his own preconceived course, he displayed a marked predilection for regarding British problems from the point of view of foreign nations and for widely intriguing with foreign potentates.

A soldier by profession, he showed so keen a preference for military pursuits that, shortly before his death, a rumour, widespread and probably well-founded, arose that he proposed to forsake his political career and assume the post of Captain-General of the Forces on the death of the Duke of Marlborough. Though devoted to the profession of arms he never attained to any considerable success as a leader of armies, his most considerable, indeed his only appreciable, achievement as a general being the capture of Minorca in 1708. Even such a victory was entirely obscured by his defeat and surrender with the army under his command at Brihuega in 1709, when endeavouring by the aid of British troops to impose an Austrian King on the Spanish nation, an attempt ending in defeat for the Archduke Charles, the aspirant to the throne, and disaster to the military forces on whose aid he relied.

This close connection with the House of Habsburg influenced the whole political career of Stanhope, imbuing him with a deep-seated admiration for the policy of the Empire and an acquiescence in the Imperial wishes amounting to subserviency. Born in Paris, educated at Oxford, spending much of his youth abroad, chiefly in Spain, he obtained a degree of proficiency in foreign languages not common in the society in which he moved. "He was the best scholar perhaps of any gentleman of his time, and of considerable parts, but with a vehemence and fervidness of speech that always hurt his hearers."* These words of Lord Onslow admirably epitomise the character of Stanhope; whether in speech or in action he continually offended, alienated or incensed those of his fellow-countrymen with whom he had dealings, and thus never obtained any influence or ascendancy in either House of Parliament or in the country at large.

* "Onslow Papers," p. 512.

Accused on more than one occasion of betraying his associates when it suited his interest so to do, it is certain that, whether by ill-fortune or design, twice at least he found it necessary, if he desired to retain the favour of the King, to desert his colleagues, whether English or German, whose confidence hitherto he had enjoyed and with whom he had cordially co-operated. In each case he performed the necessary act without compunction, retained the royal favour and forfeited the esteem and respect of his former friends.

The Ministers in England, reposing absolute confidence in him, their colleague attached to the person of the King, were ignorant of the fact that he, for the sake of gaining favour with George, had become the docile accomplice of the Hanoverians, to whom he confided many of the complaints and most of the information he received from his English friends.

Also, though they knew it not, he began to fall under the influence of Lord Sunderland, who, by the King's permission, sojourned at Aix-les-Bains, taking the waters there, thus following the usual practice of public personages in those days when suffering from ill-health or political disappointment.

The son of the profligate Minister of Charles II., married to the daughter of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, Sunderland, uncontrollable in temper, uncertain in principle, as treacherous as his father in blood and as shifty as his father-in-law, was even more dreaded by his friends than by his opponents, the latter being prepared for his savage attacks, the former invariably fearing a stab in the back. A strenuous advocate of the principles which triumphed at the Revolution, he supported with equal ardour the Act of Settlement and the consequent candidature of the House of Guelph, so impressing the Hanoverian Councillors with the fervour of his allegiance that Bothmar, in August, 1714, declares that " Sunderland showed always and continued to show more attachment to the King than any other."*

And yet—a very pregnant sign of the distrust he continuously inspired—George omitted his name from the council of Regency and conferred no office of political

* Macpherson, vol. ii., p. 640.

importance upon him, relegating him to the gilded obscurity of the Viceroyalty of Ireland. Uncertain, yet autocratic and overbearing in his political opinions, his personal attributes reflected the intemperance of his public career. With flagrant imperfections of temper and conduct he combined taste and judgment in intellectual matters; he collected a fine library, and gave sufficient encouragement to literature to stimulate the *Spectator* to write a dedication entreating the bestowal of further favours and patronage, describing the object of the eulogistic petition as " a gentleman of the most polite literature and perfectly accomplished in the knowledge of books and men." The statement, however, that the recipient of this adulatory address was conspicuous for his " candour and openness of heart while shining in all your words and actions " can only be attributed to the impression made upon the grateful writer " by the very many favours and civilities (received from you in a private capacity) which I have no other way to acknowledge."

A thread of mental aberration appears to run through the life and actions of Sunderland. His " countless treacheries," his ungovernable temper, the intolerable agitation he could neither conceal nor control when unsuccessful or disappointed in any enterprise, such as on the occasion of his omission from office at the time of the Regency, his " frenzy fits," as mentioned by his colleagues, even the " fixed and settled sourness " in his face, all demonstrate an irritability of temperament near akin to dementia. The fact that he, a nobleman of great wealth and commanding position, closely allied to the most noble families in the land, and who, in the opinion of his contemporaries, showed a lofty disregard for financial considerations, should, as undoubtedly he did, speculate widely but illicitly in the transparent frauds of the South Sea Company, in itself bears testimony to a nature ill-balanced, ill-conditioned and ill-disposed.

Ministers knew, even before his departure for the Continent, that he lost no opportunity of intriguing against them, instigating the Duchess of Munster, George's mistress —indignant and dissatisfied with Townshend for his imputed opposition to her creation as an English peeress—to influence the King in their disfavour. And the scheme

attained so great a success as to lead its author to flatter himself "that nothing but the want of time and hurry the King was in upon his going away prevented a thorough change in the Ministry."*

Now, living within a short journey from Hanover, Sunderland found his opportunity.

Contriving to obtain an invitation to Göhre, the favourite hunting seat of the Brunswick Duke, into which no unauthorised intruder could enter, and where all business, so far as possible, was tabooed, he there gained the support of the Hanoverian followers by promising the repeal of those obnoxious clauses of the Act of Settlement which disqualified foreigners from enjoying English titles or holding Crown lands, a bitter stumbling-block to German rapacity.

From the confidence of the follower to the ear of the King became a short step; the intriguing statesman soon established himself as the trusted adviser of George, into whose mind he lost no opportunity of instilling distrust of Townshend.

Circumstances helped the plot. After the quiet and successful arrangement of preliminaries, the negotiation of the treaty with France lagged and lingered, culminating in an incident which threatened seriously to interrupt the whole proceeding.

Horace Walpole, the brother of the Minister, held the position of ambassador at the Hague. From long association with the Dutch—possessing, moreover, some natural similarity to Batavian attributes both in disposition and character—he gained the confidence of the States of Holland, a feeling which he entirely reciprocated. To the States-General, much disturbed by reason of impending alliances, Walpole pledged his word that no treaty with France should be concluded without the formal assent of the Dutch authorities.

Stanhope and Dubois, in their haste to conclude the negotiations, vital, as they thought, to the welfare of both France and Great Britain, took for granted the entire concurrence of the United Provinces.

Time, in the opinion of George and his Ministers, being of much importance, they, knowing full well Dutch for-

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 59.

mality and procrastination, sent extraordinary powers to the British envoy and his colleague specially appointed for the task, Lord Cadogan, enabling them to sign the treaty at once, measures being taken to obtain subsequently the consent of the States-General.

To this Horace Walpole would in no wise consent: "Having pledged to the States my faith, my honour, and my conscience in His Majesty's name, if I should afterwards sign with the Abbé in violation of these sacred and solemn assurances . . . I shall never be able to show my ignominious head here again."* He pleads and begs earnestly that Stanhope will set him "entirely out of the business."

Months might have elapsed before the States with their cumbrous procedure would have ratified the treaty; to George, fearful that the Czar might imperil his tenure of the Duchies, newly annexed to the Hanoverian Electorate, this delay caused the greatest exasperation, which prompted him to visit all his annoyance and irritation on the Secretary of State, Townshend, of whose conduct and policy he now began to evince much disapproval.

Moreover, he believed that France would not wait;† he must therefore choose between his allies and his servants. Allies at that period proved scarce; Ministers, actual and potential, as thick as leaves in autumn. The expected happened: the King chose to retain his new friends, and without scruple threw over his super-conscientious followers.

There is some evidence to show that the overbearing, dictatorial manner Townshend frequently displayed engendered in the mind of the King a suspicion that his Ministers rarely paid sufficient deference to the royal will and wisdom. This reflection, combined with the knowledge that the Secretary distinctly disliked the policy which brought about the Northern war, over which, as his correspondence shows, he considered—"God knows we have no direction";‡ "This Northern war has been managed so stupidly it will be our ruin"—and that he displayed but little sympathy with the proposed French alliance, induced George readily to listen to the intrigues of Sunderland and effect a complete change in the personnel of his Government.

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 107. † Wiesener, vol. i., p. 397.
‡ Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 118.

Acting doubtless on directions from the King, Sunderland wrote to Townshend a violent epistle in which he curtly declares: "I never saw the King resent anything so much as this affair in which he thinks not Mr. Secretary Stanhope but himself not well used, and indeed I think it wants to be explained; the King is very much surprised at the strange notions which seem at present to prevail, as if Parliament was not to concern themselves in anything that happens in these parts of the world, which he looks upon as exposing him not only to all kinds of affronts but even to ruin, and indeed this notion is nothing but the old Tory one that England can subsist by herself whatever becomes of the rest of Europe, which has been justly exploded by the Wiggs (*sic*) since the Revolution."*

Knowing the uncontrollable nature, the "frenzy fits," of his correspondent, Townshend, though himself a hot-tempered man, might have treated the epistle with scant attention. In fact, he did not reply to it; but simultaneously he received another communication, written in French by Stanhope, his own colleague, at the express command of the King, directly and explicitly charging him with delaying and obstructing the ratification of the treaty with France, concluding with a cold intimation that the reply must also be in French in order that His Majesty might be able to read the original; truly an instance of the irony of fate which compelled one English Minister to write angry letters to another in indifferent French in order that a German monarch might get an inkling of the business his British Government transacted.

Townshend regarded the insinuation conveyed in the last communication as a direct insult: "My heart is too full of the thoughts of having received this usage from you to whom I have always been so faithful a friend, that you will excuse my not saying more. I pray God to forgive; I do,"† he replied to Stanhope; and from that moment the division in the Whig ranks became open and acute.

* "Townshend Papers," vol. i., p. 103.
† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 128.

CHAPTER XII

WHIG AND WHIG

Although, indubitably, the delay in concluding the treaty of alliance with France conduced largely to the dissatisfaction felt towards Lord Townshend by the King, yet other reasons operated in the mind of George, accentuating the irritation of the royal temper.

The Treaty of Utrecht contained a clause ceding the Isle of St. Christopher by France to Great Britain; when put up for sale the lands therein proved of considerable value—£70,000, more or less. Townshend expressed an opinion, consonant at least with modern ideas, that "being purchased by the blood and treasure of the public the nation ought to have the benefit and advantage of it."* But the King unmistakably showed that he was "pretty much determined to have the produce at his own will and private direction," probably destining the whole amount for the insatiable pocket of the newly-made Duchess of Munster, who at this time also, according to the common report, received a large sum of money from Sir Robert Child, the Tory banker, as price for a peerage which she promised to induce George to bestow upon him.

The opposition to the royal wishes in the matter of St. Christopher in no way commended the Minister to the King; in addition a still more irritating controversy arose concerning the payment of some German troops from the Bishopric of Munster and Duchy of Saxe-Gotha hired by the Hanoverian statesman to assist in quelling the Jacobite rebellion.

The flight of James and the consequent collapse of the movement rendered the employment of these reinforcements unnecessary, yet Bothmar and Bernsdorff both alleged that the treaty for their hire had been actually signed; consequently the subsidy became due. Only copies of the agreement reached this country; the transac-

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 96.

tion therefore could not be laid before Parliament, and never came within the knowledge of the Cabinet; but King George declared, and Baron Bothmar corroborated, that Walpole gave an assurance that a "way would be found" to pay the money, which statement Walpole with much warmth denied: "I protest before God that I cannot recollect that ever the King mentioned one syllable of this to me."*

As neither the Royal Master nor the Minister could speak any language which the other understood, such a mistake may well have occurred; George, however, at the time advanced the charges out of his own revenue, and the disappointment, not only of failing to get money from the English exchequer, but also of having to pay for his own defence out of his own German resources, still further embittered him against a Minister so unsympathetic towards the cherished designs of his Sovereign.

These minor differences indisputably inflamed the royal suspicion; then a cause of serious mistrust supervened. King George, as also the next two sovereigns of the House of Hanover, hated their eldest sons with a rancour equalled only by the aversion with which the sons regarded their respective fathers. Townshend, who during the King's visit to Hanover remained in London, committed the unforgivable offence to the kingly mind of paying court to the Prince of Wales.

Parliament had been prorogued; a session in the New Year seemed highly desirable, and none deemed it more so than the Prince, the Guardian of the Realm. Affecting an extremely affable demeanour, striving to gain popularity by every means in his power, the heir to the throne, accompanied by the Princess Caroline—who soon established herself in the good graces of the people—made a royal progress through the counties of Kent, Sussex and Hampshire.

Large crowds of all sorts and conditions of men and women thronged to see His Royal Highness, who permitted many of those present to kiss his hand; with regard to the ladies, when presented, he invariably kissed them himself, thereby attaining a place in the affections of a portion at least of his future subjects never accorded, at any time, to his father the King.

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 135.

George, the son, contrived occasionally to speak a few words of English, though with a "bluff Westphalian accent." This linguistic gift, small though it might be, greatly conduced to the propitious welcome the royal pair received.

Pleased with his introduction to the British public, the Prince evinced a great desire to open Parliament and thus exercise one of the most important duties of a Constitutional Monarch.

To perform this act required more extensive powers than those contained in the patent granting to the Prince his office, and the British Ministers showed much reluctance in asking the King for any such alteration of the order as might be necessary to give the requisite authority.

They were confronted with two difficulties.

Obviously the state of public business required the attention of the Legislature; but if Ministers urged the King to come to England they excited his displeasure at being importuned to leave his beloved Hanover; if, however, they solicited such extension of the powers of the Prince as would enable him to open Parliament in the absence of the Sovereign, they ran grave risk of awaking the fear in the royal mind that they were serving the interests of the son to the detriment of the prerogative of the father.

Chief among the intimates of the Prince were the Duke of Argyll and his brother, the Earl of Islay. King George regarded both these noblemen with high disfavour, and appears to have included in his resentment everybody who held friendly intercourse with them.

Townshend, Walpole and the others of the Ministry remaining in England showed sedulous deference to the Prince—" constant, not to say slavish, attention,"* is the description given to Stanhope by Stephen Poyntz, his very obsequious satellite—but it may well be doubted if they entertained, as Stanhope alleges, so great an intimacy with the Duke and his brother as to justify the jealousy of the King, who disliked these Scottish peers with such rancour as to take the very drastic step of dismissing them from all their public employments.

Robethon maliciously told Lady Cowper that Townshend and " the other Secretary of State hoped to have governed the Prince through the Duke of Argyll, but when they saw

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 66.

the King resolved and that they were in real danger of losing their own Places, they were most violent in hunting him out,"* an accusation which, though showing a true picture of the political honesty of the Whig Party, may be doubted in its individual application to Lord Townshend and Walpole.

Yet the rumour of intimacy aroused the jealousy of King George, and when Horace Walpole, despatched hot-foot to Hanover for the purpose of explaining the situation relative to the French treaty, bore with him a letter from Townshend intimating to George that his Ministers, on due consideration of all the circumstances, advised that Parliament should be summoned at once and sufficient powers accorded to the Prince to enable him to open the Session, the communication served to confirm his worst suspicions.

It was useless for the accused Ministers to defend themselves. Walpole with outspoken energy answers the whole allegation, and tells Stanhope to "lay aside that passion which seems to be predominant" in all his actions, asking the very pertinent question: "What on earth could possibly create so great an alteration among you in the space of twelve days? . . . be assured that whoever sent over the account of any intrigue or private correspondence between us and the two brothers . . . will be found, pardon the expression, confounded liars from the beginning to the end."†

But "le ministre allemand aspire à une superiorité sur les ministres anglais,"‡ the "torrent of German interest" proved too strong; London might be in a greater ferment than even during the ministerial crises in Queen Anne's time; Lord Stair, a very determined Whig, might angrily demand: "What the devil did Lord Sunderland and Stanhope mean by taking such a step? What did Lord Townshend and Walpole mean, what end did they propose to themselves?"§ Horace Walpole might journey to Hanover fondly hoping that his plausible manners, so effective with the Dutch States, would prove equally efficacious with the German King, yet the fiat went forth, "the tryal between the English and the German interest" terminated in favour of the latter, and the British Minister received his dismissal.

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 114. † Walpole, vol. ii., p. 146.
‡ Ranke, vol. v., p. 383. § "Hardwicke Papers," vol. ii., p. 556.

The blow, however, was softened—at the reputed instigation of Bothmar, who held the fallen statesman in some consideration—by the offer of the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, an office epigrammatically described by a former holder of it as one in which the business " was not enough to keep the occupant awake although too much to allow him to go to sleep."

Deeply mortified by the treatment he received, Townshend instantly refused the post, Walpole, Methuen and others at once intimating their approval of their leader's attitude and their desire, by resigning their respective offices, to follow him into retirement.

Now at last Stanhope and Sunderland perceived the danger of the course they were pursuing. The fear of such a powerful opposition in Parliament as would result from the political antagonism of these men, the disturbing effect the removal of the Secretary of State exercised on the United Provinces of Holland, then becoming somewhat doubtful of the trend of English policy, formed a combination of difficulties not lightly to be disregarded.

Most persistent pressure was brought to bear from all directions upon Walpole to induce him to remain in the Government, his command of the ear of the House of Commons rendering his defection a cause of much anxiety to those Ministers who desired to retain their offices. Stanhope especially, nervous of the consequences which might ensue, endeavoured with his usual heat to constrain Walpole to reconsider his determination. He wrote to Methuen, one of the malcontents, forcibly insisting that while no effort of the friends of Townshend would persuade George to reinstate that nobleman, yet they might " possibly unking their master or (which I do before God think very possible) make him abdicate England, but they will certainly not force him to make my Lord Townshend Secretary."*

That this highly coloured statement was due more to the irritable temperament of the writer than to actual facts may be fairly deduced. George would never have relinquished the throne of England at a time when his son, much disliked by him, would exultingly have stepped into his father's place. Yet the warning produced the required effect; influenced by these gloomy prognostications, possibly

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 156.

relying on the assurance that the King intended to offer him "some other post at home in the Cabinet Council,"* the ex-Secretary accepted the Viceroyalty of Ireland, and for a while delayed the division in the Whig ranks, although, as events showed immediately, neither he nor his friends forgave, or intended to forgive, the treacherous treatment they had received from their former colleagues.

King George, the Treaty of the Triple Alliance being signed on January 7, 1717, returned to England, landing at Margate on January 17, O.S., of the same year.

But although the treaty between the three Powers provided some safeguard for Great Britain against the designs of the northern states, in no way could the aspect of foreign affairs be regarded as satisfactory, and, as events soon showed, the fears of George and his Ministers were not ill-founded.

Domestic matters also presented problems calling for immediate treatment, notably the size and expense of the army, which, pressing heavily upon the spirits and pockets of the British people, produced considerable complaint and some dangerous discontent.

Fortune once more favoured the Whigs.

At the moment when the maintenance of that military establishment on which, as Ministers knew full well, the stability of the Hanoverian succession depended, became a matter of difficulty, a fresh alarm placed in the hands of the authorities a sufficient excuse for continuing the burden of excessive expenditure necessary for its upkeep.

On Thursday, January 29, a company of foot-guards under Lieutenant-Colonel Blakeney surrounded the house of Count Gyllenberg, the Swedish ambassador, and General Wade, entering in, apprehended the Minister and seized all his papers, leaving him prisoner in his own residence under guard.

Such an event—the arrest of the representative of a foreign power, protected from such treatment by the law of nations—created exceeding surprise. No wonder "all the foreign ministers roared," and the people concluded that nothing less than a conspiracy against the Government occasioned this "extraordinary proceeding."

To some extent the popular surmise proved correct.

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 164.

How far his royal master, Charles, may have been cognisant of the schemes prepared and elaborated by his Chancellor, Görtz, is a moot point, but the papers laid before Parliament on the opening of the session, February 20, 1717, clearly corroborate the statement in the King's speech that the correspondence seized in the house of Count Gyllenberg contained "a certain account of a projected invasion."

With the ulcer of allegiance to the Stuarts eating into the constitution of Scotland, the dread of an insurrection in the Highlands lay ever present on the mind of the English Government, and consequently the discovery of papers which, undoubtedly, bore evidence of such a design being considered, if not prepared, by a power with which George, in one-half of his dual capacity, as Elector of Hanover, was actually at war, created great consternation in the hearts of his Ministers.

The arrested documents contained details of the forces, military and financial, necessary for an expedition against Great Britain, and also statements concerning the intentions of the Czar—his favourable disposition towards the King of Sweden and his personal dislike of King George, "whom he hates mortally." Görtz, in a letter from the Hague, endorses this sentiment, and confesses that the proposed schemes were prompted by a desire to avenge the "unworthy proceedings of the King of England"; then he puts the whole matter in a nutshell by exclaiming: "Pray, Sir! which way can the King of Sweden better secure himself the recovery and possession of his said Duchy (of Bremen) than by reducing King George to be nothing more than an Elector of the Empire? By which means the King of Sweden will make himself becourted by the House of Lüneburg as in former times."

The letters of Görtz and Gyllenberg give an interesting insight into the views which filled the minds of foreign diplomatists. The belief, evidently firmly held, that the Regent fully intended to ascend the throne of France by fair means or by foul; the surmise that George counted on the alliance with his Gallic neighbours as the only means of forming a balance against the power of the Emperor, now, since his victory over the Turks, to be regarded with deep distrust; and the full certainty that France purchased such

concessions as she might obtain by an explicit guarantee to Hanover of the Duchy of Bremen, appear to be fixed ideas in the minds of the writers.

The analysis made by the Swedish envoy of the dispositions and mental qualities of the English Ministers indicates a distinct degree of penetration; he is confident that there will be no difficulty in inducing them to come to some agreement if only they are approached in the most effective manner, which would be in making overtures to them as to "what they ought to help us to take from the Czar by way of reprisals for our losses in Germany." No need exists for any delicacy or diplomacy: "The English Ministers do not mince matters, they are all furious persons." Sunderland, who "in a manner is at the head of affairs, takes his orders from the Germans, and will execute them with all the effrontery imaginable."*

Small wonder such pungent criticism, true in substance and in fact, excited much irritation in the tempers of the British Ministers and caused them to be oblivious of the traditional etiquette of diplomatic intercourse.

Confronted by these revelations, little remained for Parliament to do but pass resolutions promising all necessary support to the King and his Ministers.

Gyllenberg remained in custody, after a while being removed to the citadel at Plymouth; but such drastic proceeding as the arrest of the properly accredited ambassador of a power, ostensibly friendly and at peace with this country, caused considerable perturbation among the foreign envoys resident in the Metropolis.

To calm the feelings of the disquieted diplomatists Stanhope issued a circular letter of explanation, the sedative effect of which produced a gentler attitude among the disturbed officials, one only of whom, the Spanish ambassador, published a protest, being particularly alarmed and disgusted at such an irregular exhibition of energy as the seizure of the papers of the representative of a presumably friendly power. This disapproval doubtless was accentuated by the knowledge that a perusal of the private correspondence of his own embassy would have disclosed the information that the Swedish intriguers relied for the financial support necessary to their enterprise on the

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 402 *et passim*.

subsidies of Cardinal Alberoni, Chancellor to the King of Spain.

Charles of Sweden retaliated for the detention of his Minister by arresting the English resident, Jackson, also fulminating many threats against Great Britain, the tension being so great that war might have been declared at any moment.

It is hardly a matter for surprise that the Swedish monarch should fail to understand a situation as complicated as it was anomalous: that, while the troops of Gorg Ludwig, Elector of Hanover, overran and occupied two important portions of the Swedish dominions, their fellow-subjects, who owned the sway of King George of Great Britain, should claim to enjoy all the immunity of neutrality, and, under the protection of the British fleet, obtain great trade advantages by selling necessaries of war to the enemies of Sweden.

Moreover, not content with the detention of Gyllenberg, the British Ministers also demanded the arrest of Görtz by the States of Holland, at that time on amicable terms with the power of which he acted as Chief Minister, and instructed their resident at the Hague, Mr. Leathes, to insist that the intimation should meet with a quick response.

The fugitive, having evaded his pursuers, left the Hague and retreated to Amsterdam; being pursued to that city he again fled to Arnheim, where the magistrates caused him to be detained.

Many memorials, more prolix replies, evolved themselves from these proceedings; at length, with true Batavian caution, the States of Holland determined to release the Swedish Chancellor on a declaration by the King of Sweden that he personally had not been privy to the intrigues of his Minister, the matter coming, however, to an inglorious and somewhat ridiculous end by the States of Guelderland, during the tedious negotiations, and without any consultation with the other provinces, setting Görtz at liberty on the sole condition that he would at once return to his own country and relieve his embarrassed hosts of his highly inconvenient presence.

To an extent this evasive solution of a difficult question was due to the diplomatic intervention of the Regent of France, who, acting on the advice of Cardinal Dubois,

through the exertions of Monsieur d'Iberville, persuaded the English Government to place Gyllenberg on a frigate and despatch him to Gottenburg; King Charles, induced by the like persuasion, giving orders that Jackson should be conducted to the same vessel and returned in exchange to England.

Sincerely desirous of befriending Sweden and retaining for her some remnants of territory among the German States, an outwork in the Imperial confederacy, Philip, the Regent, sent the Comte de la Marke, one of his numerous favourites, as a plenipotentiary to Charles in the hopes of arranging matters between the fiery monarch and Great Britain.

De la Marke partially succeeded, so far as to be enabled to write to de Chateauneuf, the French ambassador at the Hague, that the Swedish monarch explicitly declared that he had no intention of committing any overt action of hostility against King George, nor of taking any part in a projected invasion of his Scottish dominions.*

In another direction also Philip grave proof of his goodwill towards Great Britain and his allegiance to the new alliance.

Peter the Czar, ever anxious to increase his own knowledge of the European political situation and to absorb the influence of Western civilisation, so soon as he abandoned the descent on Schonen, paid a visit to the Hague and remained in that city until April 4.

King George, on his return from Hanover, passed through the same place, but the inveterate dislike displayed by each monarch to the other rendered a personal interview inadvisable, and neither saw, nor sought to see, his brother sovereign.

On leaving Holland Peter journeyed to Paris, being most courteously received by the Regent and shown the beauties of Versailles, Marli and Trianon, the fountains at the former place so deeply interesting the royal sightseer that his polite host furnished him with plans and specifications for the hydraulic machinery necessary to produce the effect.

Charmed by these attentions the Czar lent a willing ear to certain diplomatic overtures made to him by the Maréchal de Tessé, finally concluding the treaty known

* Lamberty, vol. x., p. 70; "Hanover Papers," vol. ix., p. 163.

as that of Amsterdam, by which he engaged himself to withdraw all his forces from Mecklenburg, in return for a stipulation given by the Regent that France would withdraw her subsidies from Sweden and act as a mediator between the northern powers.*

Although the alarm created by the dangerous aspect of foreign affairs materially strengthened the hands of Stanhope and Sunderland, yet but little unanimity prevailed in the Government, which, on April 9, going into Committee of the Commons on the motion for supply for the naval and military requirements, carried their resolution by a majority of four votes only in a House of 300 Members, an escape which caused much searching of heart in the Ministry.

A Cabinet in the present day, staving off defeat on an important measure by such a slender margin, would have threatened, or possibly offered, its own resignation of office.

In the eighteenth century Ministers pursued the diametrically diverse line of conduct; they adhered tenaciously to their own places, but deprived rigorously all who opposed them of honours and perquisites.

To the lukewarm support of Walpole, and the covert opposition of the followers of Townshend, this narrow escape obviously must be attributed, the attitude of the ex-Secretary of State, as well as others of his party, being now in marked contrast to their former energy and persistence.

The same evening as the debate and division Townshend received the following letter:

"My Lord,—The King judging it for his service to dispense with your Lordship's services as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; I am commanded to signify his Ma^tie pleasure upon it; his Ma^ty is sorry that many circumstances render this alteration necessary, at present he commands me to assure your Lordship that he will never forget your past services, and you will give me leave to say that I shall be very gladd of an occation of writing to your Lordship upon a more agreable, as being with great respect—my Lord—your Lordship's most humble and most obedient servant,

"James Stanhope."†

* Koch's "Treaties," vol. iv., p. 220; *Political Mercury*, May, 1717; Tindal, vol. vii., p. 142; Lamberty, vol. x., p. 109.

† "Townshend Papers," p. 104.

Events did not stop with the receipt of this somewhat involved and wholly unfriendly letter.

The next morning Walpole requested an audience of the King, which being granted, he tendered his resignation of his office, that of Chancellor of the Exchequer. A graphic account of the proceedings is to be found in a letter, written thirty-four years later by old Horace Walpole to the Rev. Mr. Etough, a great collector of political odds and ends. In this epistle King George is described as being extremely surprised at his Chancellor's resignation, refusing, with temper, to accept it, and returning the seal of office, which Walpole laid on the table ten times or more; Walpole fell "into a great state of agitation, heat and flame," the water standing in his eyes, the King being in the same condition, "expressing great concern as well as resentment."*

It is interesting to conjecture in what language this interview took place; Walpole neither understood nor spoke French, the King being in the same condition with regard to English; it is to be feared that the pathos of the incident might be somewhat affected if the two actors in the episode were, perforce, obliged to express their elevated sentiments solely through the medium of dog Latin.

Then commenced an important epoch in the history of the Whig Party, when one portion found its most bitter and envenomed opponents in another section of the same political group. No conscientious change of policy occurred; none was necessary, all Whig politicians of the eighteenth century regarding it as a matter of ordinary common sense that they should reinvest their principles if by so doing they could increase their interest. The feud became not a contest between one school of political thought and another, but a much simpler though more intense struggle, a strife between the Whig in office and his disgusted brother out of it.

The dismissal of Townshend, followed by the resignation of Walpole, Pulteney, Methuen and others, entailed many changes in the Ministry; it, moreover, founded a strong opposition to the Government in the Commons, which hitherto the weakness of the Tories had rendered inoperative.

Nothing shows the self-centred principles of the Whigs

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 169.

more than the cynical hardihood with which the discarded Ministers, finding themselves out of place, immediately attacked, and in some cases attacked with success, the measures which they themselves originated, and the men once their colleagues, who still advocated that same policy,

From the moment the succession of the House of Hanover became assured the Whig Party commenced to disintegrate, the self-styled patriots who hoped for office and the self-styled patriots who failed to obtain their desires intriguing assiduously against the equally self-laudatory statesmen who by various devices obtained high place and rich emoluments, both sections strenuously declaring that they acted purely for the national benefit, a fiction which has been found useful by other discontented persons not owing allegiance to the Whig Party or living in the eighteenth century.

On the resignation of Walpole and his friends a complete reconstruction of the Ministry took place, the Earl of Berkeley, a rough old sea dog, becoming First Lord of the Admiralty, the Duke of Newcastle Lord Chamberlain, Sunderland Secretary of State with Joseph Addison as his colleague, an appointment which drew from the historian, Sir James Mackintosh, the witticism that it would have been to the advantage of the country if Swift and Addison could have changed places, as the latter would have made an excellent Dean and the former an admirable Secretary of State.

Stanhope took for himself the position of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; probably the only time in the history of England when a general of horse has held that position, for a cavalry leader is not usually supposed to be eminently adapted for the prosaic duties of managing the national finance, unless, as in later times, a devastating foray is intended to be made on the holders of property, in which case, evidently, the raiding propensities of a light dragoon would prove extremely suitable for the task.

Before many weeks of the Session had passed, the rancour between the two sections of the Whigs swelled to a high degree of bitterness.

If arguments are needed to emphasise the selfish and corrupt nature of this Whig administration, they can easily

be found in the invective which one Whig orator lavished upon another. The quondam friends who spared no abuse, who refrained from no misrepresentation, when attacking their Tory opponents, exercised even less reticence when declaiming against the enormity of their former allies.

The records of the House of Commons afford ample proof of the intense acerbity which existed between the two wings of the Whig Party, the debate on May 20, 1717, concerning some proposal for the reduction of the National Debt, presenting a vivid picture of the decadence which had befallen Parliamentary manners and the acknowledged corruption which infected public life.

Pulteney, a prominent member of the Walpole faction, openly cast most offensive aspersions upon Stanhope, charging him with deriving private benefit from the legislation which, as Minister, he advocated and produced.

In replying with the greatest heat to this allegation, the Chancellor of the Exchequer screamed out—for in moments of excitement he invariably lost control of an abnormally shrill voice—that, at least, he possessed no brother or relative for whom he had provided at the national expense, and that he contented himself with the salary and legitimate perquisites of his office.

Such an assumption of official integrity proved too much for the equanimity of Walpole, the preceding occupant of the office Stanhope then held and to whom the aspersion obviously referred. With much violence he retaliated by accusing his opponent of violating private confidences, and then, on his own part, proceeded to relate a series of conversations with the King's Secretary, Robethon, whom the speaker described as a "mean fellow" of what nationality he could not tell, but who had the audacity to obtain the reversion of an office for his son. This place manifestly was far too valuable for such a person, at least in the estimation of Walpole, who promptly set matters right by transferring the spoil to his own offspring, whereupon "the foreigner became so saucy as to ask £2,500 under the pretence that he had been offered that sum for the post."*

These revelations were greatly deprecated by other members of the party, one honourable gentleman expressing an opinion that both of the contending statesmen

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 460.

were "patriots and fathers of their country," therefore, since "by mischance they had discovered their nakedness," their colleagues should follow the example of the East, as Scripture tells us, and cover it by turning their backs upon them. The House readily assented and reverted to some other business.*

The divergence between the two sections became more and more pronounced; to this development may be attributed the curiously illogical outcome to the long-suspended vengeance impending over the imputed author of the Treaty of Utrecht.

Oxford, since his impeachment in 1715, remained a prisoner in the Tower; now, on the sage advice of Lord Trevor, he petitioned the House of Lords that he might be brought to trial and his wearisome confinement terminated.

After many adjournments the trial commenced in Westminster Hall on June 24, Lord Cowper, as Lord High Steward, presiding.

The case being opened, Lord Harcourt, Lord Chancellor to Queen Anne, moved that, instead of going through every article of the interminable impeachment, the House of Commons should be called upon to substantiate the charges of high treason, these graver offences overshadowing the lesser misdemeanours—a resolution which met with the immediate consent of the Lords.

Upon receiving this, to them an astounding and unprecedented decision, the Commons took violent exception and, when the Upper House proceeded with the trial on its own initiative, refused to take any further part in the impeachment. The proceedings therefore lapsed, the Earl of Oxford, in default of any evidence, being acquitted; as Erasmus Lewis summed up the matter, "that which was at first the resentment of a party became at last a ridiculous business."

That this impotent conclusion of the elaborate attack against Oxford was due to a change in the attitude of Townshend and Walpole is evident. Their influence, if exerted against the accused, would have assured the condemnation of the ex-Treasurer, but to "the disgusted Whigs," as Bernsdorff calls them, to embarrass and annoy the Ministers of the Crown seemed a sacred duty, the fact

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 461.

that the principles upheld by these Ministers were, not six months before, professed by themselves, in no way influencing their conduct or mitigating their antagonism.

The King, however, on the solicitation of the Commons committed the petty meanness of excepting Oxford from the act of grace extended to all other political offenders.

The mind of the Government had long been bent upon the necessity of improving and increasing the popularity of the King.

George owned none of the easy, affable manners which the later Stuarts could always assume; with true Teutonic aloofness he made no effort to gain the good graces of the people over whom he ruled and whose money he spent.

On the rare occasions on which he attended public functions the glamour which always surrounds the throne gained for him, at times, a noisy if not a genuinely hearty welcome, Addison relating how, when the King reviewed the Horse Guards in Hyde Park, the crowd pressed round him to kiss his stirrups and cheer him with loud acclamations, ill-treating also a bystander who had the temerity to cry out " High Church !" as the King left the Park.*

The reception George received from the London populace made his friends desirous that he should take more frequent opportunities of letting himself be seen " by the meaner sort of people," so, acting on this advice, in October he made a progress through some of the Eastern Counties and attended the races at Newmarket.

On this occasion all the surrounding nobility and gentry received commands to dine with His Majesty, who, however, gave stringent orders that neither Walpole nor Lord Townshend should be permitted to participate in the royal banquet.

Finding the King in the neighbourhood, the University of Cambridge, always at that period a stronghold of Whig influence, thought it should avail itself of the favourable opportunity and invite His Majesty to visit the home of learning.

George accepted the loyal invitation and returned a most gracious answer in French; it is to be hoped that the royal reply was understood by the classical scholars whom he addressed. Having arrived at the University with a

* " Blenheim Papers," Historical MSS., 8th Report, p. 49.

distinguished following, the Mayor, Corporation and high academic authorities met and welcomed their Sovereign, the amount of oratory being phenomenal.

The Recorder having made a speech in the name of the Corporation, the Mayor presented His Majesty with a purse of gold, and, in return, all the deputation had the honour of kissing His Majesty's hand. Upon the Regent's Walk His Grace the Duke of Somerset, the Chancellor, welcomed his royal guest and made an " excellent speech suitable to the great occasion, to which His Majesty made a very short but gracious answer." The Public Orator, Doctor Ayloff, of necessity exuded another address, after which the King proceeded to the Regent's House, where Doctor Bartlett, Regius Professor of Divinity, delivered a discourse, and, " by way of diversion," several Doctors of Divinity were admitted and created.

His Majesty then attended Divine Service in King's College Chapel, being welcomed to the beautiful edifice by Doctor Adam, Provost of the College, " who made a speech as the head of that Society. During the service Doctor Laughran, Fellow of Clare Hall, preached. Adjourning to Trinity College, Doctor Bentley, Master of the College, made a short oration as head of that Society, and then after having seen the Library the King was entertained at Dinner in the Master's Lodge, the University defraying the expense."

Again participating in the evening service about 7 p.m., at length His Majesty took coach and returned to Newmarket, having had the enjoyment of listening to seven speeches and two sermons, all in a language of which he did not understand one word.

CHAPTER XIII

ENGLAND AND ALBERONI

While Parliament and the Monarch occupied themselves with these matters, events occurred on the Continent of momentous importance which, since Great Britain, through the bonds of the Electorate of Hanover, had become enmeshed in the affairs of many foreign countries, seriously affected the national interests.

Spain, for long an almost negligible factor in European politics, except in matters relative to the occupancy of her throne, now developed into a source of hindrance and disturbance to the projects of the Emperor and also to those of the King-Elector, George.

A master mind controlled the administration of the Spanish people.

Giulio Alberoni, born in a cottage at Placentia in 1664, the son of a working gardener and vinedresser, by diplomatic and executive talents of the highest order placed the country he ruled once more in the front rank of Continental Powers.

Full of ambition and perseverance, longing for knowledge and the power knowledge is supposed to bring, the lad obtained employment as a vestry boy to the village priest, who, in return for services rendered, imparted such instruction as lay in his power, the Brothers of St. Paul supplementing this tuition by a more regular education.

Successively bell-ringer and parish priest, the little fat man with most brilliant eyes, scorning the drudgery of narrow surroundings, managed, by the supple arts of an Italian, to insinuate himself into the suite and confidence of the Duc de Vendôme, a great General though a debauched ruffian, and using his influence with the Duc to ingratiate himself with his native prince, Odoardo Farnese of Parma, on the death of his French patron obtained the post at the Court of Spain of agent for the Italian Duchy.

Philip, King of Spain, on February 14, 1715, lost his

wife, Maria Louisa Gabriela, Princess of Savoy, a much afflicted woman both by the course of events and by her husband.

Alberoni, conversant with the manners of the Court of Spain and with the character of its monarch, knew full well that the age and constitution of the royal widower, together with the state of his affairs, rendered it probable that the period of mourning would not be prolonged unduly, and that the fate of many countries might be involved in the choice of a new consort.

With consummate address, ability and perseverance, despite the influence of the Princesse des Ursins, who ruled the Spanish Court relentlessly, the Abbot Alberoni, now one of the secret ministers of Louis XIV., negotiated the marriage of Philip with Elisabetta Farnese, the child of his patron, Odoardo, Duke of Parma, and Dorothea Sophia, daughter of Philip, Elector Palatine, sister, therefore, to the widowed Queen-Mother of Spain. The family of the Farnese derived their origin from Pope Paul III., who showed a truly paternal interest in its welfare, endowing it mentally with some of his own belief in his own infallibility, and temporally with a goodly appanage carved from one of the Papal fiefs.

Philip, the King, always under the spell of some woman, soon yielded himself to the ascendancy of Elisabetta. Elegant, of good figure, with a noble carriage; an oval face, marked though not deformed by the prevalent scourge, the smallpox, sparkling and expressive blue eyes, white and regular teeth, combined with a most winning smile; these attractions, pleasant to the sight in every way, when attached to a Princess of Parma, who also possessed many mental advantages, soon made a very complete conquest of the uxorious monarch.

Moreover, the bride owned some accomplishments and a very determined temper which she never feared to display,* thus affording a reason for the title of " The Termagant of Spain " with which Carlyle has dubbed her, perhaps with more accuracy than most of the epithets he chooses to bestow.

The beauty and the strong will gained ascendancy over the hypochondriacal King, but the woman's nature re-

* Pollnitz, vol. iv., p. 212; Baudrillart, " Philip V.," vol. i. p. 606.

quired a mentor, and this Elisabetta found in Alberoni. George Bubb, the British Minister at Madrid, who in August, 1715, succeeded Paul Methuen in that office, declares in his own individual manner: "I have found out the gentleman who alone is absolute here, he has gained an entire ascendant over the Queen and that means over the King, who is not a lover of business and lets himself be governed in all things by her Majesty."*

Hatred of the Empire, stimulated by the War of Succession but lately finished, filled many Spanish hearts and became the cardinal point in Spanish policy. Europe knew full well the designs of the Habsburgs on Italy; none resented them more than Spain. Elisabetta Farnese and Giulio Alberoni were Italians; naturally their love of their own historic land formed a binding link between them and moved them to foment and stimulate Spanish rancour against the German enemy.

A rumour arose, sedulously spread by the Imperial authorities, that the Turks contemplated a new invasion of Italy. The political instinct of Alberoni, taught in a school of wily diplomacy, prompted him to suspect that the news preluded a scheme to occupy the minor Italian States under cover of protecting them from a Moslem attack, for the inveterate desire of the Austrian Court to obtain possession of Sicily had long been known to every Continental statesman.

From the moment of his ascendancy in the Spanish councils Alberoni strove to reorganise and renew the still great resources of the country and to strengthen her by a series of judicious alliances.

To France, the nearest neighbour, bound by strong ties of interest and kinship, he would gladly have turned; but the latent antagonism between Philip of Spain and Philip the Regent, the former nearer in blood to the succession to the French throne, though barred by his renunciation from ascending it if vacant, the latter desirous of having this renunciation enforced and his own succession assured, prevented any definite and genuine concord between the two countries. Disappointed in this direction, as the hopes of joining France grew fainter, the versatile diplomatist turned his thoughts towards England.

* R.O. Foreign, Spain, 84.

This much he knew already: the surest way to touch the hearts of the English lay through their trade.

The Spanish duties on English produce, at this time, were double those levied in the reign of Charles II.; moreover, the English merchants complained of much ill-usage. For long past the English ambassadors had striven to remedy this state of affairs.

But the difficulties were wellnigh insuperable; Spanish diplomacy consisted in " a thousand unnecessary objections upon every trifling thing," thus spinning out the negotiations to an inordinate length.

Notwithstanding the persistent efforts of Bubb, matters remained in this unsatisfactory condition for many months, although the weary diplomatist exhausted every artifice to expedite the proceedings, even offering to spend three or four hours every day for six months in company of the Spanish Monarch explaining and elucidating the provisions of the proposed commercial treaty, a proposal politely declined, or to translate all the suggested clauses into Latin, so as to avoid linguistic difficulties, which, as the would-be author candidly acknowledged, " will cause you to see the worst piece of Latin since the Monks' time."*

At length, however, by some means, probably a monetary transaction, the British ambassador obtained the co-operation of Ripperdà, the Dutch resident, who used his influence with Alberoni, and that statesman, desirous of getting the goodwill of Great Britain, himself took charge of the proceedings, with happy results, as, on December 15, 1715, a commercial treaty was signed highly favourable to England.

These pleasant relations did not continue long. Rumours reached the Spanish Court that King George lost no opportunity of effecting closer relations with the Emperor, the object being to obtain the special investiture of Bremen and Verden.

Such reports engendered suspicion; the signing of the Triple Alliance, January 7, 1717, completed the rupture, and, notwithstanding a notification from Stanhope that England and France both were willing to ratify anew the Treaty of Utrecht, and that England would use all influence to induce the Austrian Court to respect the neutrality of

* R.O. Spanish, 84, 155.

Tuscany, the Spanish Government regarded the British policy with increased distrust.

The dread that Spain would take some overt action against the Empire which would lead to a general war became so prevalent that, as Addison writes to Lord Stair, King George, in August, 1717, instructed his Minister at Madrid to ask from the Spanish Government an explanation of its intentions, especially with regard to an expedition admirably organised and of considerable strength then preparing at Barcelona.

The expectant Powers soon learnt the object of the Spanish enterprise, for the Fleet, sailing from Barcelona in August, 1717, cast anchor a short time afterwards in the Bay of Cagliari in Sardinia, at once proceeding to land the troops and occupy the island.

The Governor, the Marquis de Rubi, a Catalonian, made a fair show of resistance, sufficient, at least, in the absence of Imperial reinforcements, to save his reputation, but all the notabilities and most of the landed gentry readily acknowledged King Philip, so by November the conquest of the island became complete.

This sudden and successful stroke created much perturbation among the signatories of the Triple Alliance. The occupation of Sardinia demolished at one blow a design, much favoured by Imperial statesmen, of effecting an arrangement with Victor Amadeo of Savoy, King of Sicily, by which he ceded the latter island to the Emperor, receiving in exchange Sardinia and the confirmation of certain concessions made to him by the Treaty of Turin in 1703.

Greatly alarmed at the aspect of affairs, the French and English Governments at once despatched instructions to their Ministers to labour assiduously to prevent, if possible, the conflagration from spreading.

The first inspiration of the British King and his Ministers prompted them to follow the course they found infallible among their associates in their own country and try the effect of bribery in buying off opposition to their wishes: "The King is of opinion that a million of livres will do the business, and whatever the sum be that shall be expended is willing to contribute half."*

* Stair, vol. ii., p. 32.

Whether they destined the money for the Cardina Alberoni or for his intimate councillor, the Dutchman Ripperdà, "who has been the most hearty and zealous servant imaginable" to King George, does not appear, but, doubtless to the surprise and disappointment of both George and his councillors, the attempted corruption failed, and the Spanish authorities refused to yield up possession of their new acquisition.

Spain knew full well that, by the Treaty of Westminster, the British Government intimated to the Emperor, even if it did not definitely stipulate, that, in event of his increasing his Italian dominions, he would meet with the concurrence and assistance of Great Britain.

That Austria coveted Sicily and the Italian Duchies was a secret known to every European Court, but to obtain the first object of her desires some substitute, as a solatium, must be provided for the occupier, the Duke of Savoy, and the most convenient equivalent, undoubtedly, could be found in Sardinia; thus a grasp upon the only possible compensation which would satisfy the about-to-be-evicted Amadeo gave the Spanish diplomacy a material advantage with which to barter should negotiations ensue.

Alberoni, though desiring the friendship of England, mistrusted the German atmosphere which impregnated the Government. With true Italian subtlety he endeavoured, from the commencement of his projects, to bring such pressure to bear upon the Hanoverian Dynasty as might make it more susceptible to the benefits likely to accrue from Spanish goodwill.

From the end of the year 1717, if not earlier, he spared no effort to reconcile the two northern monarchs, Charles of Sweden and Peter of Russia, who when combined should, so he planned, make a joint attack upon Great Britain and the Emperor; Charles invading Scotland and proclaiming the Pretender, thus striking direct at these islands, the source from which Hanover derived two-thirds of her strength; Peter, simultaneously, in conjunction with Prussia, attacking the Emperor and striving to dissolve the German confederacy.

Awaiting the maturing of his northern projects, Alberoni planned the raid on Sardinia; thereupon the persistent pressure brought to bear by the English Government to

yield up this new acquisition increased and augmented the growing dislike he felt of the British nation and the distrust he entertained towards her rulers.

The suspicions of Alberoni were well founded.

Stanhope, always subservient to Austrian influence, now devoted all his energies towards effecting a policy long desired by him, that of inducing the Empire to become one of the signatories to the Triple Alliance. He hoped, if success attended his efforts, to gain two advantages: first and foremost, to quell, by the formidable array of Powers opposed to her, the warlike ardour of Spain sufficiently to ensure peace in the South of Europe, and thus afford time for Great Britain and her Allies to end the Northern War; secondly, by gratifying the Court of Vienna, speedily to attain that object so ardently desired by the King-Elector, the special investiture of the annexed Duchies of Bremen and Verden.

To procure this latter object Stanhope intimated to Austria that her schemes for enlarging her dominions in Italy would meet with the approbation of Great Britain, whose fleet, if the Emperor desired such aid, might be sent to the Mediterranean to co-operate with the Imperial forces.

For a while, following the traditions of its habitual diplomacy, the Austrian authorities refused to yield to the overtures of the British Ministry, but the promise of naval co-operation in the predatory designs of the Emperor proved too tempting a bait to be resisted, and the Imperial Court signified its willingness to join the Alliance.

Most historians record the consummation of this treaty, the Quadruple Alliance, to give it the name by which it is generally designated, as the crowning achievement of Stanhope's tenure of office, and as a shining triumph for British diplomatic ability.

Evidence, nevertheless, is not wanting to show that in this, as in many other acts, the British Minister served as the instrument of the Hanoverian statesmen, Bothmar and Bernsdorff, devoted adherents to the cause of the Empire and persistent users of the resources of Great Britain, material and diplomatic, for furthering German ends.

The voluminous correspondence of Jean Robethon is full of communications, in Bothmar's scratchy writing, showing

that the Hanoverian courtiers kept not only in close touch but practically in control of the whole negotiation.

The idea itself had been broached, as early as 1716, by the Austrian envoy, Baron von Penteriedter, whom King George, for once epigrammatic, described as "having a great body and as great a mind"; later approaches were made from the same direction to Bernsdorff, who, "being in the fullest confidence of King George and at that time the soul of his Cabinet, exercised an influence unique of its kind."*

Moreover, if proof is wanted of the secret power wielded by the German Junto it can be found in the despatches of L'Hermitage, the Elector's resident at the Hague, who negotiated the questions relative to the co-operation in this matter of the Dutch without any reference whatsoever to English Ministers or British Ambassadors,† communicating only with the Hanoverian councillors and obeying implicitly their instructions.

The Quadruple Alliance, though doubtless advantageous to the interests of the Electorate, in no way equally benefited Great Britain. It may be true that Stanhope, as his admirers claim, by means of the operations against Spain, maintained the peace of Europe during the ensuing period of twelve years, yet, as his own supporter and representative, Bubb, strongly and earnestly pleaded, to allow the Emperor to make himself master of Italy or to lose to a great extent the Spanish trade, at that time the most important factor in the commercial enterprise of this country, in no way conduced to further British interests.‡

Though the negotiations for the final conclusion of the treaty were successful, many difficulties occurred during the discussion of the clauses.

The inclusion of the Empire in a coalition which contained France as an important member produced a situation of some delicacy. The portions of the treaty especially relative to the propositions to be submitted to Spain requiring most careful treatment, Dubois thought it advisable personally to visit London and, on behalf of the Regent, to discuss the details with the British Ministers.§

But, though he was an able negotiator, the absence of the

* Ranke, vol. v., p. 385.
† B.M. Stowe MSS. 230, ff. 788, etc.
‡ R.O. Spanish, 154.
§ Wiesener, vol. ii., p. 105.

Abbé from Paris entailed the inconvenience that it left his susceptible master, Philippe le Débonnaire, subject to the influence of the French statesmen of the older school, the Duc de Noailles and the Maréchal d'Uxelles, who but little favoured the English alliance and viewed with great dislike the project which might oblige France to commence military operations against a Bourbon Prince, one, moreover, who held a nearer place in due succession to the French Crown than the Regent himself.

The arts of diplomacy, striking abilities in the transaction of business, were not the only qualities which preferred the Abbé to the confidence of Philippe d'Orléans.

The old Duchess of Orleans, in her usually caustic manner, declared that her son resembled King David both in his military, musical, saltatory and connubial proclivities; adequately to serve such a master required in the man more than a tincture of the same diversity of gifts.

Dubois lacked none of the necessary requirements; it could not be said of him as it was related of another Abbé but a few decades later, that he "was intriguing without ambition and indecent without immorality," for truly Guillaume Dubois rivalled Richelieu in the variety and strength of his political designs and succeeded in emulating his master, the Regent, in a long course of persistent debauchery.

Well aware of the precarious nature of his influence over Philippe d'Orléans, Dubois, on this occasion, sagaciously suggested that Stanhope himself might visit Paris and bring his personal influence to bear on the wayward Prince. The English Secretary consented, and in a letter to Lord Stair spoke highly of the Abbé's sincerity, of the growing fear that the Regent might be drawn aside into measures with the King of Spain and Sicily; and, finally, implored the English ambassador by no means to slacken his endeavours, as "a prince of the Regent's temper may be in a humour of concluding one day what it will cost great pains to bring him to if any opportunity be let slip."*

The visit succeeded; Philip and his Council signed the treaty, and Stanhope continued his journey to Madrid.

Here he met with less success. To induce Spain to relinquish her claims on Sicily the English diplomatist

* Stair, "Annals," vol. ii., p. 69.

relied chiefly on two propositions: firstly, a clause in the Quadruple Alliance by which the succession to the Parma Duchies, together with those of Tuscany and Placentia, should descend, in default of male heirs, to Don Carlos, the eldest son of Elisabetta Farnese, the Spanish Queen; secondly, a private offer of the British King and Government to cede Gibraltar to Spain, a bait which, in their opinion, would prove irresistible.

Neither the King of Spain nor his Ministers yielded to the seductive temptation; yet despite their refusal, France, the Emperor, and Great Britain concluded the treaty on July 22, 1718, the States of Holland, reluctantly and half-heartedly, following suit in the spring of the next year.

In the same month, owing largely to the diplomatic skill of Sir Richard Sutton, a peace between the Turks and the Empire was effected at Passarovich, the success of this mediation raising to a high degree the political position and influence of George in the Courts of Europe, von Ranke asserting that, by effecting this great system of peace which embraced Europe, George I. assumed the position to which William III. had attained after the conclusion of the Peace of Ryswick.*

But the disturbing effects of the British overtures to the Imperial Court already had become apparent.

Alberoni, bent on frustrating the designs of the hated Austrian, directed the expedition safely ensconced at Sardinia to sail to Sicily and occupy that island, an operation carried out with great success, the native Sicilians welcoming the Spanish garrison and showing great antipathy to both the Savoyard and the German rule.

Early in the year the British Government despatched Sir George Byng with a powerful squadron to the Mediterranean, instructing him to co-operate with the Austrian authorities and prevent any occupation of Sicily by the Spanish forces.

On Byng's arrival he found the Marquis de Ledi, the Spanish commander, in full possession of all the places of vantage on the island, but, meeting the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro, July 31, 1718, immediately attacked it with such complete success as to justify the words of the

* Ranke, vol. v., p. 385; Lamberty, vol. x., p. 20.

chronicler: "The English might rather be said to have made a seizure than to have gained a victory."*

So few were the triumphs of King George's reign that the chroniclers of the day, for dynastic reasons, made the most of the battle of Cape Passaro, and especially relate, as an instance of nautical nonchalance, the despatch of Captain Walton, an officer specially detailed by the Admiral to pursue certain of the enemy's vessels. This task he carried out with complete success, relating his exploit in the succinct message: "Sir, we have taken and destroyed all the Spanish ships and vessels upon the coast, the number as per margin; I am etc., G. Walton."

The destruction of the fleet, his creation after much labour and assiduity, fell as a heavy blow upon Alberoni.

That the British Government fully intended to force Spain into either active hostilities or complete surrender of its aims is evident from the whole trend of Stanhope's policy; that the action of the British Admiral met with the complete approbation of George is conveyed by the following letter:

"Hampton Court, 5 *Ybre*, 1718.

"Le Roy à écrit une lettre à l'amiral Byng contenant non seulement une entière approbation de sa conduite mais aussi des remerciments pour la grande service qu'il vient de rendre à S.M."†

But the victory, such as it was, produced the result that, through the mortification caused by the defeat, the Spanish nation and its rulers became completely alienated from this country; the former good feeling towards Great Britain entirely disappeared; British ships lying in Spanish harbours were immediately seized and British merchants imprisoned, a declaration of war between the two Powers seeming inevitable.

The difficulty which practically delayed the formal pronouncement lay in the deep-seated reluctance of the French Council of Regency, bound though it might be by treaty obligations, to enter into hostilities with a grandson of Louis Quatorze, a prince of the blood royal of France, standing closer to the succession to the throne than the House of Orleans itself.

* Tindal, vol. vii., p. 219.

† "Hanover Papers," British Museum MSS., vol. 229, p. 155.

Suddenly the ill-advised action of the Spanish Minister changed the aspect of affairs.

Stung by the defeat of his carefully prepared plans Alberoni had recourse to the questionable manœuvres of the smaller Italian Courts, where outrages upon the person of a troublesome rival formed a portion of the usual procedure.

The Prince de Cellamare, a Spanish Ambassador at Paris, received instructions to open an intrigue, through the Duchesse de Maine, an arch plotter, with the legitimised princes—the offspring of Louis XIV. by his various mistresses—with a view of their assuming control of the Government in lieu of the Regent; it being contemplated to seize this Prince whilst indulging in some illicit pleasure, his periodical habit, and, thus denuded of his guards, to carry him forcibly to the borders of Spain, there detaining him in close custody.

The design becoming known to the Duke of Orleans, with justifiable irritation he broke off at once all communication with the Cardinal, threw in his lot heartily with Great Britain, and declared war on Spain on January 9, 1719.

Twelve days previously England performed a like act, the King's message, making the declaration, reaching the Commons on December 19, 1718.

Although the entry of France and England into the theatre of war proved a great blow to the energetic Cardinal, he continued the contest by all and every means in his power. Through Baron Görtz he induced Charles XII. of Sweden to approach Peter the Czar, with the object of concerting united action for diverting the course of war so as to react to the advantage of the Northern Powers, in pursuance of which policy a scheme soon developed for striking a blow at the Hanoverian Succession by fomenting a rebellion in Scotland in favour of the Pretender and despatching an expedition there to assist such object.

James Stuart, since his expulsion from Avignon, lived at Rome, spending his time agreeably in viewing relics, taking part in processions and pious observances, intermixed with occasional carnal distractions. In December, 1718. he received a communication from the Duke of Ormonde—recalled from Paris to Madrid by Cardinal Alberoni—containing a scheme for an expedition to England coupled with

a further invasion of Scotland; also giving information that troops, to the number of seven or eight thousand men, with sufficient arms and money, would be provided, the King of Sweden himself proposing to make a foray against the northern part of the United Kingdom.

However severe may be the verdict of posterity on the misdeeds of the Hanoverian party, circumstances certainly appear to corroborate the reiterated statement of certain obsequious divines that Providence unmistakably and distinctly showed its favour to the new succession.

Ormonde in due course arrived at Corunna, and there awaited the arrival of the fleet of transports conveying a force of 5,000 men destined for the invasion of England.

On March 7 the flotilla set sail from Cadiz, and from the moment of its start experienced contrary winds and heavy weather, culminating on March 18 in a hurricane which, smiting the vessels some fifty miles west of Cape Finisterre, scattered them in all directions. Throwing overboard their guns and horses the stricken ships sought refuge in various harbours, landing the wretched soldiers, "a great number of them being sick," and "all having suffered very much from want of provisions."*

As an invading force the expedition ceased to exist, destroyed by natural forces, without having delivered a blow against its destined foe; the commander, Ormonde, together with James, who joined him at Corunna, retired, disappointed and disheartened, to Madrid, where the latter lingered, an unwelcome guest, until September.

Having been married by proxy on May 28, 1719, to the Princess Clementina, grand-daughter of the famed and chivalrous John Sobieski, King of Poland, James, taking advantage of the excuse that he desired to meet his bride, left Madrid, and in mid-October arrived once more in Rome. Here he acquired an abode in a Palazzo in the Square of the Apostles, which the Pope fitted up for his residence, presenting the unsuccessful candidate for a throne, with many compliments, the furniture of his house and the ornaments of his chapel.†

Ormonde, tarrying for a while at Santander, endeavoured with the remains of the expedition, about 1,800 men, to raise a rebellion in Brittany; but again he met with no

* *Political Mercury*, 1719, p. 160. † *Ibid.*, p. 441.

success, and the invasion, so far as the succours from Spain were concerned, came to a final close.

Two frigates, however, which sailed from San Sebastian, though experiencing heavy weather, avoided the great storm. They contained three of the exiled Jacobite leaders, the Lords Marischal, Seaforth and Tullibardine, who proposed to land in Scotland with 300 Spanish troops, already embarked in the vessels, and create a diversion in the Highlands. After many adventures, narrowly escaping capture by the English fleet convoying troops from Ireland, the gallant Jacobites, sailing by the west coast of Ireland, reached Stornoway in the far-off Hebrides, thence, after some delay from adverse winds, making their way to Kintail on Loch Duich, where they landed and strove to fan the flames of rebellion among the clans.

They met with small success, as Lockhart in his graphic story relates: "Wee did by no means think it advisable to move in Scotland till wee were sure the Duke of Ormonde was landed, for if any appearance should be made for the King of Scotland and the great design fail in the execution wee could meet with no quarters from the Government and the King at the same time reap no benefit."

Doubts evidently were felt by all as to the success of Ormonde's venture, for when Lord Stormont vehemently declared that the Duke actually had landed, the caustic chronicler pithily remarks: "I had the less credit when I perceived his Lordship's letter was dated one in the morning, about which time I knew he was apt to credit any news which pleased him,"* the noble lord having gained a wider reputation for optimism than for sobriety.

The Scottish lairds showed sound discretion in their cautious delay. Their plans already had been disclosed to the English Government by Dubois;† every Jacobite plotter told everybody all he knew, and the wily Abbé was an adept at espionage. Consequently great preparations were on foot for the defence of the realm; the Regent offered a large force of troops;‡ the Dutch States were called upon once more for their treaty contribution of men, even Imperial regiments were sent to overawe any attempt against the Hanoverian Dynasty.

* Lockhart, vol. ii., p. 18. † "Stair Papers," vol. ii., p. 387.
‡ R.O. France, No. 353.

Proclamations appeared offering rewards of £5,000 in England and £10,000 in Ireland for the apprehension of Ormonde; the value of a Duke in this country being, apparently, one-half the price of the same dignitary in the sister island.

Yet the preparations of the English Government were never needed.

The rebel forces, numbering less than two thousand men, after many vicissitudes met and suffered defeat from the troops of King George under General Wightman at the Pass of Glenshiel, June 10, 1719. The Clans broke and fled, dispersing in all directions; the Jacobite nobles, Seaforth, Tullibardine and Marischal escaped over the mountains, finally finding their way back to the Continent and exile, while the Spanish contingent numbering 274 men surrendered at discretion.

With the usual brutality of that age these unfortunate foreigners were subjected to much ill-treatment, "refused food and supplies until they were reduced to great straits which appeared in their looks, although their Spanish pride would not allow them to complain,"* the whole expedition coming thus to an ignominious end.

In other directions also the plans of Alberoni completely failed.

By the death of Charles XII. on December 11, 1718, "that poor short-sighted Hero, always pushing along *mal à propos* and always knocked down, since his enemies have ten men to his one, and a thousand pounds where he has half a crown,"† the project of a northern federation fell to the ground like a house of cards.

With his fall the whole political aspect of Sweden changed.

The new Queen, Eleonora Ulrique, entertained strong feelings of friendship for Great Britain which were in all respects shared by her husband, the hereditary prince of Hesse-Cassel, now Prince Consort of Sweden, who, having served in the British Army and worn the British uniform, "was so great a witness of the power and glory of England in the late war that he would choose the friendship and alliance of that Crown before any other."‡

The first result of the change showed itself in the trial

* Lockhart, vol. ii., p. 22. † "Stuart Papers," vol. ii., p. 201.
‡ Carteret MSS., British Museum, 22511.

and condemnation of Görtz. Disliked by the people and hated by the notables, his great schemes misunderstood, his wide talents unappreciated, he fell a victim to the prejudice produced by his master's failures, and died on the scaffold in February, 1719.

Upon his death Sweden showed full readiness to ally herself with Great Britain. It is possible that if Charles XII. had lived his feverish energy and military capability might have preserved the balance between Sweden and Russia, but the weaker grasp of his successor and the hopelessly impoverished condition of the kingdom rendered such hopes impracticable.

Peter the Czar, as an ally of Sweden, meant Peter the Czar as master. In this predicament national necessity as much as royal predilection drove the new Queen into the arms of Great Britain, and she gladly welcomed the arrival of Lord Carteret, the rising hope of Whiggism, as a plenipotentiary empowered to deal with all the subjects in dispute between the nations.

Protection against the Russian Czar, now violently hostile and preparing for a descent on Stockholm, formed the first requirement.

The summer sky blazed red with the reflection of the island villages burning by the hands of the Muscovite invader; the fleet of Sir John Norris lay at anchor at the Skaw; if England would intervene Sweden might be saved, but unless aid came without delay, Peter the Czar could dictate his terms to the Swedes, who no longer possessed the power to resist him successfully. The situation presented many difficulties to the young diplomatist, not the least being the little desired co-operation of the Electoral envoy and the heavy apathy of the English Ministry, totally subservient to the designs of the Hanoverian household. The arrival of the fleet would at once have relieved the Swedes from their peril, yet for many weary weeks no pressure on the part of Carteret could induce Stanhope to give the necessary instructions to the admiral. At last, almost too late, the permission to sail arrived, and the advent of the British squadron at once averted the danger. Peter, fearful lest his retreat should be threatened, withdrew his ships to Reval, alleviating immediately the intolerable position of the Swedish nation.

But the interference of the German statesmen, Bothmar and Bernsdorff, still continued.

A perusal of the despatches of Carteret gives a luminous insight into the tactless intriguing and constant mismanagement of these councillors.

It may indeed be urged as a patriotic trait in their characters that the welfare of the Electorate lay so close to their hearts as to cause them to be oblivious to the detriment that same policy inflicted on British interests, but the meanness and the incompetency of the course of action they advocated, the blundering ineptitude of their formal procedure, even when directed towards the aggrandisement of their master's German dominions, bear eloquent testimony that the uncomplimentary animadversions of their English critics were true in substance and in fact.

The chief characteristic of Carteret's methods of diplomacy, a tactful but honest directness, must have been sadly disturbed by the clumsy subterfuges of Bernsdorff, who, as Secretary Craggs bluntly observes, " has puzzled and muddled in the northern affairs with the adroitness of a cow," a not altogether happy simile, as it was not the bovine German who underwent the process of milking, but the patient and fecund British public.

On one critical occasion in the negotiations with Sweden, Bassewitz, the Electoral envoy, received orders from the Hanoverian councillors to answer " dilatorie " upon that head; " for which," contemptuously remarks Carteret, " I don't know an English word. What can a Minister do under such orders ?" Irritated and embarrassed by the continual interference he bitterly declares to Craggs: " The German Ministers have been within an ace of spoiling all, and they have now retarded impertinently the conclusion of the solemn treaty by charging Mr. Bassewitz with ridiculous chicane."*

Carteret, a polished gentleman, spoke with restraint, but Craggs, a person of little refinement either mentally or physically, relieves his mind concerning the German advisers with almost brutal frankness: " By long observation and really applying it to the best of my ability I have discovered that old Bernsdorff is an old woman; he keeps certain appearances of gravity and wisdom which at

* Carteret MSS. B.M., Add. MSS., 22511, p. 130.

bottom are no better than arrant stupidity. . . . He has conceived a parcel of mean, testy animosities . . . and without comprehending what is right or wrong, without having any system of affairs—nay, without having formed a scheme of his own for his German affairs, he lets everything moulder and crumble away without doing anything or suffering anybody else to attempt it. The worst of all is that the King has not made the same discovery that I think I have, and in these Northern affairs we can neither get forward nor backward."*

Small wonder under such circumstances that a mind at once brilliant and direct, such as Carteret possessed, should chafe at the weariness of such companionship, should describe the suggestions sent to him by his Hanoverian colleagues as "trifling stuff," and remark with frigid nonchalance: "I regarded their advice, as an honest man should, with great contempt."

Yet, notwithstanding the many obstacles cast in his way, he managed to complete his mission with perfect success. The treaty of friendship with Great Britain guaranteed the freedom of the Baltic to British trade in return for subsidies and assistance against the Czar, and, moreover, contained an article concerning Bremen and Verden, preliminary to a definite agreement, signed in 1720, by which Sweden ceded absolutely the Duchies for a payment of one million crowns.

While matters progressed satisfactorily in the North, events in the South tended also in a direction favourable to Stanhope's plans.

The star of Alberoni began to wane.

Personal dislike to the Cardinal prompted the action of the Emperor, the Regent and King George himself, the downfall of the ambitious statesman being the object of each and all of the sovereigns, in this course the Ministers agreeing heartily with their masters.

Stanhope, writing to Dubois, expressed in exact terms the motives which actuated them: "We shall act wrongly if we do not consolidate the peace by the removal of the Minister who has kindled the war, and as he will never consent to peace until he finds his ruin inevitable from the

* "Stair Papers," vol. ii., p. 399.

continuance of the war, we must make his disgrace an absolute condition of peace."*

The task was not so difficult as it would have been two years before.

Philip, the slave of his confessor, or his wife, or indeed of any person who obtained his confidence—"he wanted nothing but a prie-dieu and a woman"—now fell completely under the influence of Daubenton, his chaplain, a French Jesuit, who, once the firm friend of Alberoni, changed to his determined enemy.

The Spanish grandees hated the gardener's son whose pedigree was so inferior and whose intellect so immeasurably superior to their own, and who, moreover, treated their counsels with contempt and their emoluments with economy; last, though not least, Laura Pescatori, the Queen's nurse, intrigued night and day against the Minister, weaning the confidence of Elisabetta from him bit by bit.

Also at this time the Duke of Parma, the direct patron of the falling Cardinal, yielding to the solicitations of Lord Peterborough, began to falter in his friendship, eventually instructing his agent, the Marquis Scotti, to proceed to Paris and there interview the Regent on the subject of Alberoni's dismissal.

There is reason to believe that Scotti at the commencement of the consultations displayed an attitude by no means unfriendly towards his talented countryman; but Philippe d'Orléans intended to get rid of the all-powerful Cardinal; Scotti owned a huge family and limited means; the arguments of the Regent, always cogent, became unanswerable when they took the form of fifty thousand crowns; the agent, consequently, proceeded to Madrid, did his work well, and the Minister fell.

Although the disgrace of the strenuous Cardinal did not at once cause the cessation of hostilities, it practically sealed the triumph of Stanhope's policy, for within eighteen months the treaty between England, France and Spain was concluded; the latter Power entered the Quadruple Alliance on February 17, 1720, and Europe, for a time, enjoyed the blessings of peace.

For dynastic reasons many writers praise, almost with-

* "Spanish Kings of the House of Bourbon" (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 559.

out stint, the foreign policy of George and his Ministers up to this period.

As a fact, but for the accidents of fate—the storm which dispersed Ormonde's expedition against England and the bullet which slew Charles of Sweden—the foreign policy pursued by Stanhope, in which his colleagues acquiesced, would have entailed grave consequences on this country; provoked the renewal of the civil war under infinitely more favourable circumstances for the cause of the Stuarts, and might have proved fatal to the dominion of the Guelphs.

Great Britain became embroiled in that which would have developed into a most dangerous and destructive war with a Power, hitherto an ancient ally, whose interests in no way clashed with those of this country, simply from the subserviency of the Whig Ministry to the self-seeking policy of the German King and his Teutonic followers, the disastrous effects of this course of conduct being averted, not by any act of the Government or the Monarch, but by the providential death of the royal soldier at that time the chief antagonist.

By checking and disturbing the projects of Peter the Czar, which in no way affected the welfare of Great Britain and only remotely concerned the interests of Hanover, the Whig Ministers irritated and annoyed Russia, impelling her to listen to the overtures of Sweden propounded by Görtz and financed by Alberoni. But for the death of Charles XII. the alliance of the two Northern Powers would have been effected, an invasion of Scotland by Swedish forces projected, and a serious attempt made to restore the Stuarts.

The absence of sufficient assistance, the lack of a competent commander and the general forlornness of the situation when James Stuart made his second attempt in 1715, dispirited the Highland clans and the Lowland gentry; the disastrous failure of Ormonde's expedition, both the first and the second time, froze the enthusiasm of the English Jacobites. Had a fully equipped army, commanded by a noted captain, such as Charles XII. himself, appeared in Scotland and a well-organised rising have taken place coincidently in England, with a dynasty on the throne beloved by none, its German surroundings execrated by many, who dare say that the individual

deficiencies of James Stuart would have made abortive the efforts of his followers and allies ?

The futility of Stanhope's northern policy is clearly shown by the fact that on the death of Charles XII. the English Government stultified itself by a complete reversal of its previous conduct and strained every nerve to support Sweden against the influence of Russia, the very Power into whose embraces English efforts persistently had driven it.

For George personally the valid excuse may be advanced that, as a German Prince, the aggrandisement of his German dominions formed the principal object of his ambition, and that he attained his desires with a minimum of cost to himself.

No such defence holds good concerning his British Ministers.

As their correspondence shows, they execrated the necessity which compelled them to embark on the Northern War, but the necessity was of their own making. They feared that by advocating a course of conduct conducive to British interests, by opposing enterprises upon which the Sovereign had set his heart, no matter how detrimental they might be to their native country, they would excite the royal displeasure and imperil their own power and places of profit.

The reasons advanced by Townshend in favour of the acquisition of Bremen and Verden show in every line the shallowness of the paid advocate, the sophistry of the special pleader; when he realised that the continuance of the project threatened his own tenure of power, he dolefully declared that "the northern war would be his ruin"; when ejected from office he dropped all pretence and opposed the maintenance of hostilities, and in this attitude Walpole consistently supported him.

Again, in the South of Europe, in no way could British interests be improved by the establishment of the Austrian Empire as a naval power, which the possession of Sicily would inevitably entail.

The trade of the South of Europe yielded much profit to this country and, as foreseeing minds observed, proved the forerunner of immense commercial enterprises. Yet for the sake of pleasing King George, the House of Bruns-

wick being firm followers of the Imperial Court, not only did Great Britain expend money and lives in assisting the spread of Austrian dominion in Italy, but, in an endeavour to buy off the justifiable opposition of Spain, British Ministers, Stanhope especially, proposed to yield to that country the British posts of vantage in Minorca and Gibraltar, the gate of the Mediterranean.

No possible benefit could accrue to Great Britain by assisting the Empire in its invasion of Italy. France, weakened, bent on peace and internal reform, now supported England in a most friendly spirit: no need existed for an alliance with Austria as a means of maintaining the balance of power in Europe. Yet, out of deference to the desires of the King and his Hanoverian councillors, Stanhope not only engineered the Quadruple Alliance, but, in addition to that mistake, offered to deprive this country of the manifest advantages which the occupation of Gibraltar conferred.

The stability of the dynasty, the maintenance of the Protestant succession, demanded these sacrifices—such is the assertion of the writers who attempt to palliate the policy of Stanhope, and to those people who derive from the shibboleth "the Protestant succession" as much consolation as the elderly lady in the narrative found in the blessed word "Mesopotamia," such reasoning may seem valid.

But the dynasty need never have been in danger, lacking though it did every quality necessary to commend it to the people of this kingdom. The constitution of Church and State, which the formula "Protestant succession" comprised, might have been founded even more securely than its authors were able to effect but for the opposition engendered by the determination of the Whig Party to keep all power and patronage in its individual possession, and to exclude from the public service everyone except its own members and their relatives or dependants.

This continued proscription from any material part or influence in the administration of the national resources produced in others, men of ability and position, many being well affected to the House of Hanover, a feeling of unrest, at times amounting almost to despair, which in a degree endangered the tranquillity of the country, for, reacting on

the masses of the people, it caused a continuous growth of dissatisfaction which any untoward event might have stimulated into direct antagonism.

To crush this danger Stanhope and his Whig colleagues endeavoured by all measures to conciliate sundry foreign powers, even taking the extreme steps of subsidising them with British money to furnish troops to overawe British citizens in certain eventualities; to keep the sovereigns of these auxiliary States well disposed towards the Whig Ministry entailed the relinquishment of British interests and the abandonment of British places of vantage.

From such a course of conduct Stanhope did not shrink; the magnitude of the sacrifices he was prepared to make, the ease with which he could have avoided the necessity, the narrow, selfish policy which prevented his doing so, these actions supply the evidence sufficient for his condemnation.

CHAPTER XIV

FATHER AND SON

To those statesmen who knew George I. before his accession to the throne of Great Britain, and, not being blinded by party exigencies, could judge his character with unprejudiced eyes, doubts always arose as to whether the strong autocratic tendencies which marked his nature as Electoral Prince would not prove a serious danger to his rule as Constitutional King should he ever wear the crown of this realm.

These doubts appear to have been falsified by the course of events and the conduct of George to have been misunderstood, his predilections for despotism exaggerated or his discretion underrated.

In reality George possessed all the desire for personal power with which he had been credited, but the pressure of surrounding circumstances proved so strong that it compelled him to curb his natural inclinations. As a celebrated historian has remarked: "A tranquil reign was never actually attained by George, his life was passed in contests necessary to take possession of the throne or resulting from it,"* and these conditions prevented him from attempting to govern this country except within the limits prescribed to a monarch by the constitution over which he presided.

But while his common sense urged him to restrain his despotic tendencies in public affairs, he gave free vent in his intercourse with his own family.

Lord Harvey, that "mere white curd of asses' milk," as Pope caustically describes him, speaking from his own personal knowledge alleges that on a certain occasion Prince Frederick, son of George II., "began to hate his father very heartily and not very secretly,"† this description exactly applying to George II. himself, when Prince of Wales, and equally to the attitude adopted by King George I. towards his only son.

The defects of the Government policy both in Spain and

* Ranke, vol. v., p. 387. † Harvey's "Memoirs," vol. i., p. 125.

the North of Europe produced a state of affairs subversive of the national interest, and consequently fraught with danger to the popularity of the new dynasty, for, in truth, it must be observed that the first two members of the House of Hanover did little themselves to remedy the situation. Both the King and his son, by their own behaviour, created in this country a condition of public opinion so detrimental to the regal dignity, so destructive of the royal character, that if an aspirant to the throne possessing even a modicum of the qualities essential in a ruler had presented himself, the people of these islands would have welcomed him with relief and gratitude.

No such candidate appeared; James Stuart, his own worst enemy, failed in every way to impress his cause on the British people or to commend his personality to them. This being so, paradoxical as it may seem, the fact that the first three sovereigns of the Hanoverian line showed bitter dislike and antagonism to their eldest sons conduced appreciably to the stability of their hereditary authority, for those persons of social importance or political celebrity who found themselves out of favour with the King and his Ministers, perforce attached themselves to the Heir Apparent to the throne, as the only means then available of obtaining any influence in public affairs.

That George I., as King, showed inveterate dislike to George II., when Prince of Wales, is incontrovertible; why the father entertained such antipathy to his offspring is not so easily explainable.

The feeling, moreover, was reciprocal. Some contemporary writers are of the opinion that George, the Prince, while reflecting his father's aversion, evinced, at times, respect and affection for his much-afflicted mother; but whether his love for this deeply injured parent embittered his feelings towards his father, or whether hatred for his father stimulated attachment to his mother is a moot point; that the hatred existed is incontestable.

It is possible that the King, whose relentless cruelty to his miserable wife must always be an indelible blot on his memory, was actuated by sentiments springing from similar motives, resentment at his unhappy union producing inveterate dislike to the children, its results.

The Duchess of Orleans invariably showed such extreme

bias against George as to render caution necessary in adopting any statement of reputed fact which she may retail. More than once, however, she has declared that the cause of the strained relations between George and his son lay in the doubts which the King entertained with regard to that son's paternity. After alluding to "ill and villainous memories which are best forgotten," she adds: "I have an idea that the King of England believes that the Prince of Wales is not his son, because it is impossible that he should behave to his own child in the manner in which he conducts himself."* In another letter she reiterates the statement and declares that many people cast reflections upon the Prince's birth, but as the King "recognises him as his son, he ought to treat both him and his wife better."

Modern writers attribute these rumours to the fact that, as doubts were thrown on the legitimacy of the birth of James Stuart, heir to the throne, ardent Jacobites at once seized the opportunity of casting like aspersions on George, the heir to the Protestant succession; such motives, however, could not have influenced Elizabeth Charlotte of Orleans, for, though well affected towards the family of Stuart, her deep affection for her aunt, the Electress Sophia, and her own close relationship with the House of Hanover gave her an intimate knowledge of the suspicions and doubts which existed among her own immediate relations.

Jealousy of his son undoubtedly actuated George during the early portion of his reign, and the behaviour of the Prince but little tended to diminish the feeling. No amount of the glamour that envelops the occupant of the throne can portray George I. as other than a disagreeable man in manners, disposition and character, possessing, at the best, but mediocre mental attributes; his son inheriting most of the unpleasant paternal qualities, to which must be added many individual shortcomings of his own.

The father, short, stout, commonplace in appearance, phlegmatic in disposition, with a stolid face and protuberant eyes, exhibited but little royal dignity in either mien or manners.

According to Lord Chesterfield everything in the composition of the son, George, Prince of Wales, "was little";

* "Duchesse d'Orléans' Lettres" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 375.

he had "all the weaknesses of a little mind without any of the virtues or views of a great one."*

Undoubtedly of very small stature, George, the Prince, showed much self-assertion both in character and demeanour.

It is reported that, when a certain diminutive peer from the West Country attended the Levee, the Prince accorded him an extremely hearty welcome which elicited enquiries regarding the cause of such unwonted cordiality. "Oh!" replied a cynical observer, "it is because he is so rejoiced to find someone shorter than himself within his Court."

In the lampoons and street ballads of the day constant reference can be found to the assumption of the Prince's manners and the affectation of his walk: "You may strut, dapper George," exclaims one of these gutter rhymesters, while another poet of the slums, alluding to this peculiarity and also to the custom acquired by the Princess of Wales, when she ascended the throne, of orating at length on all occasions, scornfully writes:

> "Since England was England, there never was seen
> So strutting a King and so prating a Queen."

The affected gait must have been very pronounced, for Craggs, a Minister, and therefore a courtier, in a letter to Lord Stair describes how, when the Prince paid a visit to his children and Lady Portland, the governess, received him, "she made him the lowest curtsey that ever was performed, but he returned it by such a courageous strut towards her as you have only seen a hero make in a tragedy; she says she was not frightened but, 'pon my word, I am."†

Inordinate pride, a liking for the pageantry of his position—"the trappings of royalty were as pleasing to the son as they were irksome to the father"—a strong touch of avarice which, as is usual, increased with age, and a violent temper formed the characteristic traits in a disposition which no amount of flattery could render amiable or attractive.

The hastiness of Prince George's temper undoubtedly diminished his popularity, as Saussure, the French traveller, states in his memoirs;‡ while on all sides, from many diverse

* Chesterfield, "Characters," vol. ii., p. 432.
† Stair's "Memoirs," vol. ii., p. 107. ‡ Saussure, p. 46.

sources, it is easy to discern that this view, together with his extreme immorality, caused him to be disliked most cordially by those who habitually came in contact with him.

When angry, a not infrequent occurrence, he swore at all who fell in his way and abused even the Ministers to their faces, calling Sir Robert Walpole " rogue and rascal "; and to his brother Horace " liberally and publicly dispensing the appellation of scoundrel and fool "; indeed, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu tersely sums up this side of his character by declaring that he " looked on all men and women he saw as creatures he might kiss or kick for his diversion."*

His wife, Caroline, daughter of the Margrave of Anspach, though a conscientious and right-minded woman, by her own behaviour, so far from correcting and neutralising the faults of her husband, in fact aggravated and accentuated them.

Chesterfield's character of her, though doubtless a highly coloured picture, in one respect at least is a true portrayal: " She would have been an amiable woman in social life if she had not aimed at being a great one in public life. . . . She valued herself in simulation and dissimulation, by which she made herself many enemies and not one friend, even among the women nearest to her person ";† and this habit of deception, fostered indubitably by the continuous intriguing at the Court of her father-in-law, became so marked as to gain for her from the German favourites the title of " La Grandissime Comédienne ";‡ also, sad to relate, induced her to conceal from all, even her medical attendants, the intestinal trouble from which she died and which, perchance, might have yielded to surgical treatment.

A woman gifted with more tact would have smoothed some, at least, of the constant irritation existing between father and son; Caroline, on the contrary, increased it.

By her direct and somewhat domineering manner she caused the King to resent her interference, and earned from his royal tongue the appellation, " Cette diablesse, Madame la Princesse." §

* " Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Letters," p. 131.
† Chesterfield, " Characters," vol. ii., p. 437.
‡ " Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 163.
§ Walpole, " Reminiscences," vol. iv., p. 283.

In face handsome, endowed with small and beautiful hands which she displayed to great advantage when she played the harpsichord, at which she was an adept, her figure, always well developed, became, as she grew older, so much stouter as to gain for her from the Jacobite scribes of the day the constant epithet, " the fat Princess."

On the accession of her husband to the throne she at once assumed control of the political situation, guiding George with some skill and exercising much influence over current events, with calm resignation shutting her eyes to her husband's patent infidelities in order that she might retain her covert domination of his mental springs of action.

There can be little doubt that, when Princess of Wales, she assisted the son in forming a party against the King, his father, countenancing those prominent statesmen and politicians who formed an opposition to the existing Government. That this rival party was deliberately organised for a specific purpose and maintained by all necessary measures is evident, the behaviour of the King providing ample excuse for such conduct.

From the arrival in England of the Prince and Princess of Wales, George I. endeavoured to exercise the strictest and, at times, almost humiliating control over their establishment, directing his son with regard to those who should hold office about his person, displaying in all things little consideration for the Prince's dignity or *amour propre*, the son resenting this treatment with great bitterness and showing his irritation on many occasions.

Then suddenly the crisis developed.

A christening took place at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, when the second son and fifth child of the Prince and Princess of Wales—an infant who died in February, 1718, aged three months—received the first rites of the Church.

The King was present, with the intention of acting as godfather to his grandson. Also in attendance waited Pelham Holles, Duke of Newcastle, for forty-three years a Minister of the Crown, whose strength of intellect lay in inverse proportion to the length of his public service.

The Prince and Princess desired that, in addition to the King, the Queen of Prussia and Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of York and Bishop of Osnabrück, should stand as

godparents, and remained in the belief that such would be the case until the company assembled and the ceremony commenced.

King George had different views; he arranged that the Duke of Newcastle and the Duchess of St. Albans should occupy the position of sponsors, but apparently in no way considered that any intimation of his decision need be given to his son.

The service commenced; the Duke stepped forward to perform his duties when, in a paroxysm of rage, the Prince of Wales striding up to him, made some insulting remarks or, as the *News Letter* of the day reports, " whispered in his ear that he was, as is reported, a villain or a rascal and that he would find him."*

Whitworth, the British Ambassador to Berlin, who was in attendance, knowing full well the tetchy nature of the minor German princes, with the true spirit of a diplomatist insinuates that the Prince " thought it were an indignity that a subject should be godfather to his child, and his Royal Highness thought fit to carry his resentment so high as to use very unbecoming words last night at the christening in the King's presence,"† the details of the indecorous behaviour being given more fully in a memorandum written by Charles Delafaye, Under-Secretary of State.

This narrative runs as follows: " Last night, at the Christening, the Prince said to the Duke of Newcastle in the King's presence though not in his hearing: ' You rascal, I will fight you '; so his Grace apprehended, who this morning acquainted the King with it. The King therefore sent the Duke of Kingston, the Duke of Kent and the Duke of Roxburgh in a written order with his own hand to this purpose: ' Les Ducs sont chargés d'aller trouver mon fils de ma part pour lui demander s'il a dit au Duc de Newcastle dans ma présence les mots: " You rascal, etc."' Ye Prince said only one word was mistaken, he only said: ' I will find you,' and so he would in him the insolence to stand godfather to his child against his inclination."‡

Apparently the degradation of having a mere English Duke as godfather to his offspring caused the Prince not

* " Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 541.
† R.O. George I., Domestic, Bundle 10, No. 186.
‡ *Ibid.*, No. 193.

only to lose his temper but also all knowledge of the construction of English sentences, while the wrath of the King at the insult to his own royal consequence cast by the slight put upon his nominee for sponsorial honours could only find vent in a series of measures of great severity but little dignity.

Not content with turning his son and his daughter-in-law immediately out of doors, and commanding them to leave the royal palace at a few hours' notice, he directed that enquiry should be made concerning all persons in the Prince's household who held commissions in the Army and ordered Lord Sunderland promptly to dismiss them from the military service of the Crown. The Duke of Marlborough, Captain-General of the Forces, received commands that neither horse nor foot guards should attend the Prince and Princess;* even the royal children were taken from their parents, who were prohibited from visiting them except by express permission of the King.

The Prince wrote three letters to his father, in the latter of which he states that he and his servants would leave St. James's Palace as soon as possible;† he then promptly proceeded to act accordingly, taking refuge in Lord Grantham's house in Albemarle Street.

This severe treatment dealt to the son by the parent called forth wide remark, the Princess especially meeting with much sympathy, the report spreading abroad that, upon her separation from her little ones, she showed deep maternal distress, fainting several times.‡ The household having dispersed, the royal pair were left to the care of a few inferior servants, their plight being such as to elicit invitations from many of the nobility, who offered their houses to the homeless couple; but after an interval, possibly timed sufficiently long to arouse indignation against the paternal tyranny, the Heir Apparent and his wife took possession of a mansion in Leicester Fields,§ openly and definitely setting up a Court in opposition to that of the King and creating a party antagonistic to his Ministers.

The royal children, together with their governess, Madame

* R.O. George I., Domestic, Bundle 10, No. 189.

† Lamberty, "Histoire," vol. x., p. 160.

‡ "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 543; "Duchesse d'Orléans' Lettres" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 362.

§ "Marchmont Papers," p. 408.

Gamin, the loss of whose company the Princess especially deplored, remained at St. James's Palace, where their grandfather paid them the honour of a visit, the first for a considerable period, but rigorously refused to allow their parents access to them.

With a lack of dignity, frequently displayed by the first two members of the Hanoverian Dynasty, King George took the unprecedented course of issuing to the foreign ambassadors and representatives resident in this country a circular letter detailing the above events, even condescending to the particulars that the Vice-Chamberlain, Mr. Cooke, received instructions to order the Prince to leave St. James's forthwith—a procedure which not only disseminated widely the knowledge of the royal dissensions, but drew forth many disparaging remarks on the nature and behaviour of both father and son, producing widespread distress and depression in those well affected to the House of Hanover and equally exhilarating the adherents of the Stuart cause.

Neither George I. nor George II. signalised their reigns by any brilliantly meritorious achievement, but it may justly be said of both that, by their private and public acts, they pre-eminently succeeded in destroying the sense of reverence and respect for the monarchy which, up to their time, the bulk of the nation both cherished and displayed.

The low estimation in which the people at large held the royal family is evinced by the number, bitterness and unconcealed disparagement of the lampoons and caricatures which abounded during the reign of the first two Georges, and the knowledge of this popular disaffection warped the judgment and cramped the actions of the Government which ruled in the King's name. Moreover, if the plans which George and his advisers thought fit to adopt had come to full fruition, most serious consequences might have ensued, fraught with grave danger of European complications and tending to produce a serious breach in the Constitution of the British Parliament.

The King made a determined and calculated attempt to divert the succession to the Hanoverian dominions from his son, the lineal heir; he also approved of a scheme by which the prerogatives of that son, if he ascended the throne of Great Britain, would be seriously curtailed and

the Crown practically deprived of one of the most important privileges still appertaining to it, the power of creating peers.

To the inveterate and somewhat vulgar resentment of George himself the first of these measures must be attributed; from the dislike which his favourite Minister, Sunderland, showed towards the Prince, and the fear which that animosity engendered that the time might come when the Heir Apparent would repay with interest the unfriendly actions of the Minister, the second attempt derived its initiative. Lady Suffolk made a distinct statement that King George I. burnt two Wills signed by other testators in favour of his son, possibly those of the Duke and Duchess of Celle or of the Electress Sophia. Horace Walpole, in his "Reminiscences," amplifies the narrative and declares that, on the death of King George I., Doctor Wake, Archbishop of Canterbury, produced the Will of the deceased monarch and fully expected that, according to precedent, it would be opened at the first meeting of the new Council of the Successor, King George II., and publicly read.

To the great surprise of the Archbishop, George II. took possession immediately of the document, put it in his pocket and "stalked out of the room without uttering a word on the subject."

The Will never appeared again, and a strong suspicion existed in the minds of the courtiers that it also was destroyed; indeed, the rumour took such substantial shape as to assign a reason for the act—a desire to avoid the performance of certain clauses, one of which bequeathed a sum of £40,000 to the Duchess of Kendal.

Subsequent facts appeared to confirm this allegation.

Lord Chesterfield married the Countess of Walsingham, the reputed niece of the Duchess—gossiping tongues declared for a closer relationship—and being desirous of enjoying some portion at least of the estate of his wife's near relative, on the death of that notorious lady, instituted legal proceedings for the recovery of the legacy, but subsequently withdrew the record "on terms," to use the modern legal parlance; "it was confidently believed that he was quieted with £20,000."

Whether or not substantial corroboration existed of these stories cannot now be ascertained, but evidence, almost conclusive, has been obtained that the Will of

George I. annexed by his son, George II., contained provisions excluding the latter from the heritage of the Hanoverian Electorate and bequeathing those dominions to the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, the senior branch of the House of Brunswick.

The provisions of this testament were so far-reaching, and if put into effect would have reacted so greatly to the detriment of this country, that, although anticipating the historical sequence of events, a recital of the circumstances connected with it may prove interesting.

In the correspondence of the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State in the year 1727, many communications can be found from Horace Walpole, the British Ambassador at Paris, on the subject of this Will.

The document—of which three copies appear to have been in existence: one in the possession of the late Duke of Wolfenbüttel, the designated inheritor, one in the custody of Archbishop Wake, and a third held by some person unknown, probably the Duchess of Kendal—must have been submitted to the Ministry at Hanover, for Walpole specifically declares: " I have been honoured with your Grace's very private letter of ye July 6th O.S. acquainting me that, by your last letter arrived from Hanover, it appears to be the unanimous opinion of the Ministry there that ye late King's Will relating to his Majesty's foreign dominions is illegal and invalid, which indeed is no more than what I expected by ye perusal of it."

Serious apprehensions arose in the minds of all concerned that the Duke of Wolfenbüttel would attempt to seize his new legacy, relying on the assistance and sanction of the Emperor, by no means well affected towards the King-Elector or the union of Hanover with Great Britain.

Stimulated by fear of this action the Ministry at Hanover expressed a strong opinion that no time should be lost in sounding Cardinal Fleury, the French Chancellor, as to whether, in event of hostilities with Austria, France would co-operate with Great Britain in enforcing the succession of King George II. to his German dominions.

Walpole, acting on his instructions, waited on Cardinal Fleury at Versailles, who, after having examined the Will of George I., " showed the utmost detestation and astonishment at the ill disposition of those who could suggest to

his late Majesty an advice of so mischievous a nature, which, as it would not be legal in itself, could have no other tendency than to give an handle for raising confusion and disorder in his own family, and it looks as if it were done with some such design considering in whose hands the Will was lodged abroad."

There is no record of the negotiations which evidently were opened with the rival House of Brunswick; but in December, 1727, the Duke of Newcastle writes to Walpole that the envoy of George II. had concluded with Count Dohn, acting for the Duke of Wolfenbüttel, a treaty between that prince and the King of England. This document consisted of one "separate" article only, evidently of a financial character—which Walpole was permitted to communicate, in strict confidence, to the French authorities—and, in addition, to state "that the affair of the late King's Will . . . being left quite out of the treaty, his Majesty thought that the giving up of the Will unopened would be quite sufficiently secured by the Count Dohn's declaration by way of a letter to my Lord Townshend."

Although apparently George II. was willing to take the written word of the envoy with regard to the actual return of the required document, yet he distinctly refused to show implicit belief in the honour of that envoy's master, his own kinsman, for he personally wrote to His Highness giving him to understand that the treaty would not be ratified—in plain words, the promised compensation would not be paid —until the Will actually had been given up.

Further commands were also despatched to Walpole to send back, at once, "the copy of the late King's Will and Codicil to be delivered up with all copies that have been made of them unto his Majesty's own hands."*

This ended the attempt, deliberately designed by George I., to deprive his son of the Hanoverian heritage; a policy which, if effected, truly might have saved this country great anxiety and considerable expense, although such a motive in no way influenced the testator's intentions, for George regarded his German Electorate, where he reigned despotically, as a far more valuable and desirable appanage than the sovereignty of Great Britain restricted by its parliamentary constitution. Consequently he became pro-

* B.M. Add. MSS., "Newcastle Papers" 32761; "Letter to *Times*," January 21, 1909, Hon. Evan Charteris.

portionately desirous of withholding such a delectable inheritance from one whom he disliked so vehemently as his own son and heir.

This antagonism to his only male child appears, from all extant evidence, to have been shared by the Hanoverian councillors, and most malignantly by Lord Sunderland. Allusions to the hostility of the German statesmen, Bernsdorff and Robethon particularly, and their continued efforts to exclude the Prince of Wales from any participation in public affairs, appear in many contemporary annals, Lady Cowper specifically declaring: "It is very plain that the foreign Ministers had no mind that the Prince should have the Guardianship, . . . Monsieur Robethon owned to me that he wished the restrictions might be so made that the Prince would not accept."*

The fair diarist, it is true, believed that the enmity shown by the King's Secretary to the Heir Apparent sprang from his disappointment at not receiving an expected bribe; yet, whatever may have been the cause, the testimony is unmistakable that the enmity continued in being.

In this connection also the Duchess of Orleans with characteristic vehemence asseverates: "I say positively that M. Bernsdorff excited the King of England against the Prince and Princess of Wales; my son (the Regent) wished to approach them, but Monsieur Bernsdorff is come in anger to tell Abbé du Bois that he is not to mix in such business."† Shortly afterwards the same accusation is reiterated: "Monsieur Bernsdorff has demanded with great heat that the Abbé du Bois shall not meddle in the quarrell between the King and the Prince of Wales."‡

The most cogent proof of the attitude adopted by Bernsdorff towards the Prince is to be found in the fact that when, for political purposes, a reconciliation between father and son became advisable, Stanhope, the Secretary of State, took every precaution to prevent the secret from coming to the knowledge of that German councillor and his colleagues, the break between the English Government and the Hanoverian Junto dating from the incident.

With regard to the strong antipathy shown towards

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," pp. 109, 117.
† "Duchesse d'Orléans' Lettres" (Brunet), vol. i., p. 420.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 437.

Prince George by Lord Sunderland much evidence is available, Lockhart specifically declaring that George I. "was always managed and directed by the Earl of Sunderland, who at that time was powerfully supported by the favourite and predominant German Ladys and Ministry"; that this noble Lord was "at open war with the Prince, who vowed and declared war against him if he ever came to the throne."* Even more direct testimony to this effect is given by Lady Sundon, the favourite lady-in-waiting to Princess Caroline, who expressly states that "between the Earl of Sunderland and Prince George there is a mortal antipathy, while Lord Stanhope hates the Princess."†

The infusion of political as well as domestic acerbity in this quarrel produced wide-reaching effects. George, the Prince, by his jointure enjoyed an annual income of £50,000 paid on the usual quarter days charged on the Excise duties on beer,‡ and in addition the grant of a further £50,000 per annum voted by Parliament. This adequate income, free from any interference by his father, gave a certain liberty of action to the Prince and his wife, who, living in a house which they had purchased in Leicester Fields, formed a Court and following, dependent upon their good graces, which lost no opportunity of demonstrating its hostility to both King George and his Ministry.

On the elevation of Stanhope to the House of Lords, in July, 1717, Walpole became incontestably the most prominent personality in the Commons; under his guidance and unrivalled parliamentary experience the Opposition proved more than a match for the Government, now represented by the second-rate politicians Craggs, Aislabie and Joseph Addison—admirable writer, mediocre statesman—with the logical sequel that the ministerial measures were delayed and the royal commands disregarded, to the manifest satisfaction of the Prince of Wales.

George, the father, retaliated in characteristic fashion.

"Last week the King referred it to the opinion of twelve judges whether it was not in his power to educate Prince Frederick and the rest of the children, and to place servants about them and whether they might not all be under his

* Lockhart, vol. ii., p. 57.
† Lady Sundon's "Memoirs," p. 94.
‡ R.O., George I., Domestic, Bundle 2, No. 32.

command. Nine of the judges gave their opinion that he might have the education of the children, etc., the other three were against it."*

The Judges decided that the Sovereign could control the education of the royal family, citing the example of King Charles II. and his nieces, the Princesses Mary and Anne, the daughters of his brother, the Duke of York; also that of William III. and the male heir to the throne, Anne's little son, the Duke of Gloucester;† but they differed on the cogent point: who should pay for the said instruction.

King George urged that the cost should be defrayed from the Prince's handsome allowance; the Prince showed no strong objection to the education of his children being controlled by the King, but, categorically and aggressively, refused to pay one penny toward such expense.

These quarrels, with the inevitable result, an increase in the unpopularity of the royal family, also reacted upon the efficiency and authority of the Government. The favour of the Prince stimulated the activity of those Whigs who remained in Opposition, and it is indisputable that the Ministry suffered both in reputation and stability by the onslaught of its opponents.

It must, however, be admitted that the conduct of Walpole and his friends, in their antagonism, showed such factious inconsistency as to call for reprobation, even from those who most admired the undoubted talents of the celebrated Whig statesman. Political principles were cast to the wind, personal dislike and jealousy alone swayed his conduct, and in nothing did his inveterate hostility to Stanhope show to more disadvantage than in the attitude he assumed towards the Bill for the relief of Nonconformists from some of the heavy disabilities which lay upon them.

Since the days of Charles II., when, in accordance with the promise made at Breda before his restoration, that Monarch endeavoured to promote measures of toleration for all creeds, and in so doing found that those who were most active in replacing him on his father's throne were even more determined to maintain the supremacy of his father's Church, all legislation tended towards erecting

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 553.

† "State Trials," vol. xv., p. 1195; "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 553.

barriers which might prevent any encroachment by Dissenters on the privileges of the Anglican establishment.

The Occasional Conformity Act, though rendering the position of persons who did not adhere to the Established Church somewhat more endurable, yet left them suffering under many disabilities, especially those inflicted by the Test and so-called Schism Acts. The Nonconformists had been the strongest supporters of the Protestant Succession; naturally, when they found on the throne of Great Britain a Monarch whose religious opinions, if he possessed any, were inclined to Lutheranism, they trusted and hoped that efforts would be made to relieve them of legal enactments always troublesome and occasionally tyrannical.

The Act of Settlement ordained that the King of Great Britain must be a Member of the Church of England. It is absurd, however, to imagine that George joined the national Church from any predilection for her distinctive doctrines; mundane not moral considerations influenced him; he attended the prescribed services and became a periodical communicant not for the salvation of his soul but for the security of his Civil List.

His behaviour during his enforced attendance betrayed the little regard in which he held the creed of his people or the religious susceptibilities of his subjects.

He could not assume sufficient adaptability to emulate the example of his mother's Stuart relations, one of whom, Charles II., invariably slept, as long and as peacefully as possible, during the sermons which it was his lot to endure; George, on the contrary, when, in accordance with the Constitution, he attended service at the Chapel Royal, St. James's, became so weary of a ritual of which he did not understand one syllable that he habitually began to talk loudly in French or German to whomsoever sat behind him.*

Yet even in those moments of relaxation from religious exercises His Majesty did not lack the countenance of the Church; Doctor Young, Dean of Salisbury, frequently participated in the conversations, his knowledge of German greatly commending him to his royal master, who showed his approbation of this spirit of tolerance by bestowing good preferment on the accommodating cleric, the latter, like many another ecclesiastic in the eighteenth century, never

* Wraxall, "Memoirs," vol. iii., p. 60.

permitting his sense of reverence or propriety to stand in the way of his temporal advancement.

But the attitude of the King towards religious questions undoubtedly encouraged the hopes of his Nonconformist subjects that some relief would be given them from the religious disability under which they suffered. However, the Bill, which bore the somewhat ambiguous title, To Strengthen the Protestant Interest, when introduced by Stanhope, met with very qualified support, even Dr. Wake, the Archbishop of Canterbury, opposing it in a speech singularly uncompromising for one who, in the King's own words, " bowed too much for an honest man."

On being sent down to the Commons, as was but natural, the Tory debaters brought their most powerful oratory to bear upon the measure, " being allowed by everybody to have distinguished themselves very handsomely against the Bill, but Mr. Walpole bore harder upon the Court than any Tory durst attempt to do."* Ranging himself decisively against the Whig Ministers, in the course of a speech which forcibly refuted most of the opinions he himself, when in office, held, he delivered a most damaging attack and made a direct and extremely successful attempt to accentuate the differences which existed between the King and his son, the Prince.

Between the Prince and Lord Sunderland a rancorous hatred already existed, so much so that Speaker Onslow, to an extent an impartial observer, makes the astonishing assertion that the latter, with the sanction of the King, projected a scheme for excluding from the succession the heir to the throne. Although Onslow casts some doubt on the authenticity of this rumour, plentiful evidence can be deduced from the remarks of contemporary writers with regard not only to the inveterate personal enmity which existed between the two, but also as to the openly expressed intention on the part of the Prince to inflict severe consequences on his antagonist whenever he possessed the power of doing so.

On a nature at once so turbulent and so tortuous as that of Sunderland this threat of reprisals produced immediate effect, which showed itself in conduct eminently characteristic of the man.

* " Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 575.

At his instigation the Government, with the declared consent of the King, introduced a Bill for restricting the Peerage of the United Kingdom.

The new legislation limited any fresh creation of Peers to a total not exceeding six above the then existing number of the House of Lords; but twenty-five Peers of Scotland could be made hereditary members of the Upper Chamber in lieu of the sixteen Peers heretofore elected as representatives in each Parliament. Some of the more statesmanlike minds at once discerned the grave, if not dangerous, complications which might ensue from such enactments and threatened opposition to them.

The King vehemently desired to return to Hanover, and strongly objected to the delay which necessarily would be entailed should a long parliamentary contest ensue.

Under these circumstances Stanhope withdrew the Bill, and the Monarch, relieved from any constitutional impediment, forthwith departed for his Continental domains, accompanied by the Duchess of Munster and Lord and Lady Howe; the latter, in the scandalous chronicles of the age, being credited with a royal sire and a mother of easy temperament, but to whom later historians assign a less exalted lineage, describing her as the daughter of Prince Rupert.

Before leaving England King George appointed a new Regency, and again committed the undignified and petty act of omitting the name of the Heir Apparent to the throne from the executive body which controlled the affairs of the realm, thus giving countenance to all the scandalous rumours then prevalent and weakening alike the reputation of the Monarch and the stability of his newly-established authority.

The Prince and Princess of Wales retired to the country, the young Princesses, still resident at St. James's Palace, holding the official levees, at which the Ministers, the foreign ambassadors, and the fashionable and official world in general paid their respects.

For six months George remained in Hanover, returning to London in November, 1719, when he opened Parliament on the 23rd of the same month, the Ministry immediately reintroducing the Peerage Bill.

In the interval the ground had been well prepared.

A vehement epistolary war raged during the recess,

Addison joining issue with Walpole and Sir Richard Steele, "little Dicky whose trade is to write pamphlets." Even in company with such experienced scribes Walpole's common sense and direct methods assured him the advantage, his treatise, "The Thoughts of a Member of the Lower House in relation to a project for restraining and limiting the Powers of the Crown in the future creation of Peers," being by far the most effective contribution to the controversy.

To facilitate Ministerial projects a change of offices was effected in the Government, Stanhope, in March, 1718, becoming Secretary of State in the place of Sunderland, who assumed the duties of First Lord of the Treasury and Lord President of the Council, the former post affording him plentiful opportunities for the exercise of his own individual propensities.

He determined that the Bill, his favourite progeny, should pass, so, knowing the attributes of the times, he took steps which he thought would be the most conducive to that end.

An eye-witness of his procedure thus describes it: "The difficulties he was in reduced him to all methods to secure his power, and indeed he had no scruples in making use of any. He bought all men as he could get them, some by places, others by promises, and many by more secret ways, as it was generally said and believed, and with boundless profusion; men set their own price and got it."*

It is therefore hardly a matter for surprise that upon the reintroduction of the Bill in the House of Lords one opponent only offered serious resistance to it, Lord Cowper, who, ousted from the Chancellorship in March—his wife said because he found it impossible to do business with two madmen and a dragoon, a somewhat pungent description of his colleagues—followed the example of all Whig Ministers out of office and attacked with acerbity his quondam friends.

The Bill passed without a division and was sent down to the House of Commons.

Here it met with a widely different reception.

A meeting of the dissentient, or—to use Bernsdorff's epithet—"disgusted" Whigs had been held at Devonshire House, the general purpose tending in the direction of

* "Onslow Papers," p. 509.

permitting the Bill to pass, its primary object, that of limiting the Royal prerogative, being considered to be in consonance with Whig tenets.

But Walpole thought otherwise; he feared that, if the Ministry gained the signal advantage of passing legislation which could render the Government of the country a close and select oligarchy, the position of the administration would become impregnable; then, a long farewell to place and power except for those who were admitted within the charmed circle.

With his matchless talent for management he persuaded the lukewarm politicians attending the meeting to pledge themselves to oppose the Bill; consequently, when the debate opened, Ministers found themselves confronted by forces of such oratorical weight and influence as they little expected to encounter, and with which they were but ill prepared to cope.

Walpole, in the course of a long and most powerful speech, to quote Lord Onslow's description, " bore down " all before him and showed his knowledge of human nature by laying especial stress on an argument which he foresaw would carry exceptional weight with the rich Whig commoners desirous of obtaining social rank and position. He emphasised the fact that if the Bill became the law of the land there would be " no way of arriving at honour but through the winding sheet of an old decrepit lord or the grave of an extinct noble family," concluding by taunting Stanhope with the well-directed sarcasm: " It is a matter of just surprise that the Bill should have been brought in by a gentleman who was not long ago seated in this House, but who having got into the House of Peers is now desirous to shut the door after him."*

Overborne in debate, the Government found themselves also outvoted in the lobbies, suffering defeat, in a House of 450 members, by a majority of ninety-two. Speaker Onslow, whose comments on these events are full of interest and information, expresses an opinion that " it is amazing to all the world that the King should be drawn into this measure so destructive of so essential a part of the prerogative. It can only be accounted for by his suffering himself, from his want of knowledge of the Constitution,

* " Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 619.

ever to be governed in all domestic affairs in this country by those whom he employed; . . . the preserving them against the rage, as his Ministers called it, of his son might very likely be his principal motive to this extraordinary step."*

The Bill owed its defeat to the defection of many Whigs hitherto steadfast adherents to the Court.

Craggs, who, being Secretary of State and one of the leading ministerialists in the Commons, possessed exceptional opportunities of feeling the drift of party opinion, insists that "on the credit and support of Bernsdorff" many of the Whigs ran riot, and that the party at large, uncertain as to "where the credit lay at Court and what changes were going to be made," were divided, "hauling and pulling twenty different ways."†

The secret lies in the words "who has credit at Court and what changes are to be made."

No party trusted Sunderland; rumour declared that Stanhope, always a soldier at heart, now tired of politics, longed to relinquish his ministerial responsibilities and become Captain-General of the Forces on the death of Marlborough, palsy-stricken and effete.

George might wish to punish his son, but did those who held the ear of the King, the German Junto, really desire that the Sovereign should denude himself of the most important prerogative remaining to the Crown? Moreover, did they seek to deprive the Monarch of all power to give to them, his favourite followers, that which they most desired, status and position in the Legislature, the only means of which they could obtain political control in Great Britain, the land of promise?

Walpole declared, at this very time, of the powerful mistress, Ermengarda von Schulenberg, "that her interest did everything, that she was in effect as much Queen of England as ever any was"; and then he added the significant words: "I do everything by her."‡

Walpole and Lord Cowper, to whom these remarks were made, destroyed the Peerage Bill by seducing the Whig Members of Parliament from their party allegiance; if, as is probable, they obtained the secret support of the Duchess

* "Onslow Papers," p. 509. † "Stair Papers," vol. ii., p. 405.
‡ Lady Cowper, p. 132.

of Kendal, always ready to lend her aid to those who were able and willing to purchase it, their success with a corrupt and subservient legislature was assured.

It is true that the all-potent mistress, having become an English Duchess and filled her coffers with English money, for a time favoured the Ministers who provided her with these good things; nevertheless there is evidence to show that she was willing to co-operate covertly with Walpole, daily rising in the King's good graces and daily asserting his authority over Parliament; while he was not the man to stand in the way of bringing entirely to his interest this, the only person who appears to have obtained any substantial influence over the phlegmatic nature of George.

That such influence existed is incontrovertible.

The Duchess obtained from the King all she wished, and her desires, like herself, were not small.

Having made her an Irish Peeress, much to her disgust, in 1719, in April, 1716, George, in defiance of the spirit, if not the letter, of the Act of Settlement, created her Baroness Glastonbury, Countess Feversham and Duchess of Kendal in the United Kingdom. She lacked personal charm quite as much as George lacked knightly chivalry. Tall, bony, unattractive in mind as well as in body, superstitious and devout—not an uncommon trait in elderly sinners—she appeared ostensibly content with the small pension allowed her by her Royal admirer and the honour of his visits "when he had nothing else to do, which happened very often."* By selling her influence she contrived to amass huge sums of money extracted from British subjects, and, by exercising her fascinations with the King, to persuade him to bestow on her as much public treasure as he had authority to disburse. If Horace Walpole is to be believed, George even divided the jewels of Queen Anne among his mistresses, so that his daughter-in-law on her coronation, after his death, was perforce obliged to borrow her pearls from the nobility and her diamonds from the Jews.†

Obtaining such material benefits, Ermengarda von Schulenberg contentedly dispensed with sentimental adjuncts.

Popular contemporary opinion credited George with another mistress, Madame von Kilmansegge, subsequently created Countess of Darlington. As has been previously

* Lord Chesterfield. † Walpole, "Reminiscences," p. 281.

observed,* this lady probably owned a nearer relationship, being the child of his father's depraved mistress, Baroness von Platen, consequently his own half-sister.

Undeniably the King exhibited as much attachment to her as his cold disposition would permit, granting her considerable sums of money from his own resources and many opportunities of adding to her store from the pockets of his subjects, finally making a handsome provision for her daughter, the young Countess von Platen, on her marriage.

Whatever may have been the real attributes and vocation of this lady, she herself entertained no delusions as to the estimation in which the world held her reputation for virtue, for—Caroline, Princess of Wales, being the deponent—Madame von Kilmansegge carried about with her a certificate signed by her husband "in all due Forms that she had always been a faithful Wife to him and that he had never had any cause to suspect her Honesty"; truly, as the royal narrator observed, "it must be a very bad reputation that wanted such Support."†

Other names were included in the list by current report, but little evidence exists as to the authenticity of the scandal. However, a few months before his death, George undoubtedly contracted an intimacy with a young lady of English nationality, Miss Anne Brett, the reputed daughter of Colonel Henry Brett, the mother being the notorious wife of Charles Gerard, Earl of Macclesfield, whose own career, noted for its libertinism, was yet far surpassed by that of the woman he married, the daughter of Sir Richard Mason, her immorality, even in that immoral age, being so pronounced as to compel her husband to divorce her.

Miss Brett, the offspring of this alliance, presented a marked contrast to the other denizens, actual or problematical, of George's seraglio, being young, distinctly good-looking and only reasonably rotund.

She held sway for six months, during which time she gave promise of every quality which usually appertains to ladies occupying her position in the royal graces, especially the attributes of avarice and effrontery.

Her mature and royal lover then died; whereupon, with a fine sense of fitness in nomenclature, she immediately married Sir William Leman.

* See p. 147, *ante.* † Lady Cowper, p. 69.

CHAPTER XV

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND CORRUPTION

While King George enjoyed the sylvan glades of Herrenhausen, the sporting delights of Göhre and the, doubtless, charming interludes with his Teutonic enchantress, the realm over which he ruled as a Constitutional Monarch passed through a crisis unprecedented in its national history.

An epidemic sprang from abroad.

In August, 1719, a frenzy of stock-jobbing broke out in Paris, and subsequently infected this nation.

It derived its genesis from the efforts of the Regent to find means of supplementing the revenue of the realm and diminishing those debts which a generation of warfare imposed on his country.

On the advice of John Law, a financial authority gifted with views and impulses so novel as to amount to genius, Philippe d'Orléans founded a bank, the success of which, in regulating the national resources and stimulating industrial activity, became so great as to prompt him to give a charter to a new trading venture, called the India or Mississippi Company, from which the royal treasury hoped to attain a distinct accretion of wealth.

Law, a Scotsman of good birth, in the course of a dissipated and irregular youth quarrelled with a certain John Wilson and slew him in a duel; then, fearing to abide the issue, fled to the Continent.

Living for a while the life of a peripatetic but highly successful gambler, he at length settled in Paris and devoted himself to serious financial pursuits for which he possessed extraordinary talents. The establishment of the India Company afforded him an opportunity of displaying his gifts to great advantage, for, having gained the confidence of the Regent, he obtained the appointment of director of the new enterprise, and, to use the words of a newspaper of the period, "produced a kind of enchant-

ment, for money which was so scarce now became a drug, and the stock of the Company, which was 40 per cent. discount some months ago, is now advanced to 900."*

In reality, Law substituted a paper currency for the old system of payment in cash, the extreme scarcity of specie cramping and restricting the whole trade of the country. Encouraged by the success of his methods he undertook the gigantic task of reconstructing the national system of finance, lending 1,200 million of livres to the Government, and funding the other public debts at 3 per cent. interest.

The shares of the Company rose by leaps and bounds, the popularity of the promoter ascending in equal proportion.† Evidence as to the adulation paid to the successful financier is given by Pollnitz and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the latter cynically relating that Law treated Dukes and Peers extremely *de haut en bas*, and they in their turn treated him with the utmost submission and respect.‡

In the end this extreme popularity culminated in his downfall; all might have gone well had not the scrip of the Company become the vehicle of outrageous stock-jobbing which eventually entailed ruin both on the concern and its originator.

Somewhat of the same course of affairs happened in England.

The pressure of the National Debt, enormously inflated by the wars of the reign of Queen Anne, impelled the Ministry to the contrivance of a system of finance which might relieve the taxpayers from some portion of the heavy annual charge which pressed upon them.

Indications can be found in the correspondence of the period which infer that Craggs, afterwards Secretary of State, speculated or desired to speculate in the French financial ventures; certainly the schemes of Law prompted both Craggs, the son and his father, James Craggs the elder, also Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to start an enterprise somewhat similar to that so popular in France, presumably for the purpose of placing the public funds on a more secure basis, indubitably to make large profits for themselves.

* *Political Mercury*, August, 1719. † Pollnitz, vol. ii., pp. 244, 245.
‡ "Lady Wortley Montagu's Letters," vol. ii., p. 83.

In lieu, however, of producing some concrete and well-considered design for forming a sinking fund and paying off the pressing national liabilities, the English politicians proposed to absorb the whole National Debt into the capital of a speculative concern, the South Sea Company, a Corporation founded in 1711 by Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, for monopolising the trade with the West Indies and South America, the reputed site of El Dorado.

The National Debt, estimated at £50,000,000, consisted almost entirely of annuities. The scheme proposed to pay the holder of these at a rate of interest of 4 per cent. per annum, receiving from the Government the old scale of 5 per cent., the surplus of 1 per cent. together with the hypothetical profits accruing from the South Sea trade being sufficient, so the optimistic prophets predicted, to pay off the body of the whole debt in twenty-five years. Notwithstanding a shrewd suspicion on the part of the public that individuals holding high official positions were playing a financial game of their own, Aislabie, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, being credited with having speculated already heavily in the Stock, the Bill passed and the South Sea Company became the holders of the greater portion of the National Debt.

With keen political acumen Walpole saw and seized the opportunity of reinstating himself in the royal graces.

By laying great stress on the anomalous state of the public affairs by depicting the immense power, financial and influential, which thus had accrued to a private corporation which, having obtained control of the public debt, might become absolute dictator of the National administration, he instilled the very gravest disquietude into the mind of George, absolutely ignorant of the nature of the British Constitution and by no means a lover of representative institutions.

A letter sent by Bernsdorff to the Imperial Ambassador, Count Zinrendorf, betrays the fact that communications had taken place between the King and the Whigs out of office in which the opponents of the Ministry endeavoured to impress His Majesty with the belief that Sunderland and his colleagues designed "to establish themselves and be able in the future to give laws to the King and his son and even remove them when they think proper."

Those who made this alarming statement held the opinion that certain counteracting measures should be effected forthwith, Bernsdorff, with much emphasis, closing his remarks with the information that, in the opinion of most of those friendly to the royal influence, "there is a necessity to change hands, and as the persons who offer this project are of consequence and promise sincerely to stand by His Majesty he may safely give in to them."*

That Walpole and Townshend designed "to remove the Ministry," as a correspondent declares, is very evident, and that Sunderland, on being apprised of the intention, taking into consideration the whole of the surrounding atmosphere, should be "put into no little fright," and thereupon should consult his colleagues, Stanhope and Craggs, is equally conceivable; the result being that the Ministers came to the determination of approaching the leaders of the Prince's party with a view to their joining the Government anew.

The quarrels and violent antipathy which existed between George and his eldest son, disputes and recriminations which neither the King nor the Prince attempted to conceal, aroused much disturbance of public opinion and threatened to become dangerous to the stability of the dynasty.

Should a reunion of the two sections of the Whig Party become feasible, the first step, obviously, must be in the direction of a reconciliation, ostensible at least, between these two most prominent members of the royal family; therefore Lord Cowper, the ex-Chancellor, took tentative steps in the desired direction and endeavoured to get into communication with the King.

In all affairs, whether public or domestic, in which King George participated in England, the idea which invariably dominated the royal mind took the material form of a scheme to get money.

The reconciliation with his son afforded George an unrivalled opportunity of squeezing some further supply from his reluctant Ministers, whose alarm and embarrassment rendered them more than usually susceptible to the royal wishes. Lord Sunderland therefore "promised to come into all measures of the Court, and in particular of that of raising £600,000 to pay all the debts of the Civil

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 595; "Townshend Papers," p. 104.

List."* Neither father nor son wished to be on friendly terms; their mutual dislike had become so intense as almost to amount to hatred, the younger scion of the royal family declaring that he would not live at St. James's if the King, his parent, also abode there, and Lord Cowper's most persuasive powers failed to induce the Prince to alter his decision in even the smallest particular.

The Church next brought its influence to bear, in the persons of Doctor Wake, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Norwich, but with little avail; "the King was inexorable if ruffled," and George felt extremely annoyed that his son objected to submit himself humbly to his father's mercy. Worse, far worse! grave difficulties arose with regard to raising the much-required funds, so the royal anger grew in intensity.

A proposed plan had been put forward that no definite terms should be arranged, but that the Princess should have her children again and the Prince should write to the King, at the same time returning to St. James's. But when default in the financial terms appeared likely to ensue the royal indignation burst all bonds of restraint.

"Did you not promise to bring the Prince bound Hand and Foot, and don't you bring him back without my having power to put any one servant in or out about his person? and what's become of all the money you promised me?" Such dignified remarks fell from the lips of the irritated Sovereign, while the Prince's language, in accordance with his frequent custom, could not specifically be repeated decently by those who attempted to patch up the differences between these distinguished personages; indeed, to all the advances the King made so little response that Lord Sunderland declared that he never found George cold to him "until he mentioned the word reconciliation."†

At length the arguments of the Ministers persuaded the Prince to write a humble letter to his father and to proceed forthwith to Court, where in the private closet he knelt and murmured a few words of respect, "a short compliment, saying it had been a great grief to have been in his displeasure so long."

"The King spoke not one word to him either good, bad or indifferent, but made a sign to him to rise with his

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 128. † *Ibid.*, p. 137.

hand, nor did the Prince stay in his presence above two minutes."*

To the Princess, George vouchsafed a somewhat longer interview. In his phlegmatic, unemotional way he appears to have regarded her with a degree of admiration, so much so as to give rise to a foolish rumour that his hatred of his son originated in jealousy.

Caroline, hearing that the King intended to visit her children, awaited him in the ante-room. On the King's arrival, he and the Princess retired into the little private chamber; the Lord and Lady in waiting on the Princess and the two Turkish pages of the back-stairs, Mahomet and Mustapha, attending the King, remained without, the Turks entertaining the others with an appropriate and delicate story of the condition of the stomach of the late Queen of Prussia after her death from presumed diamond poisoning.

The two royal personages continued in conversation for an hour and ten minutes; the Princess "came out transported at the King's mighty kind reception," at least so said the Princess.

"Walpole told my Lord that the King was very rough with the Princess—chid her very severely in a cruel way."† Walpole probably spoke the truth.

The most significant portion of these proceedings lay in the fact that "the Germans knew not one word of it thirty minutes before the Prince went and were not a little confounded," thus furnishing corroborative evidence that to the bad influence of the Hanoverian Ministers should be ascribed the continuous friction in the royal family.

Stanhope met the two German favourites in the "outward room" at Leicester House; in a brusque manner he suddenly called out to them in his shrill, high voice:

"Eh bien, messieurs, la Paix est faite, la Paix est faite."

"Les lettres sont-elles arrivées?" queried Bothmar.

"Non! Non!" replied Stanhope, "c'est la Paix ici. Nous allon revoir notre Prince!"

"Notre Prince?" asked the German in astonishment.

"Oui, oui! Notre Prince, notre Prince," was the reply, "nous l'attendons pour être réconcilié avec le Roy."

"Monsieur! vous avez été bien secret dans votre affaire";

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 596.
† "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 150.

said the old German in an injured tone, to which Stanhope, once the obsequious ally of the Hanoverian Junto, sardonically rejoined:

"Oui, oui, nous l'avons été. Le secret est toujours nécessaire pour faire les bonnes choses."*

Bothmar could not bear the insult, nor being given up by his old master, and burst into tears, which action was very faithfully reported to the Prince and Princess. More followed; the influence of Bernsdorff, once so powerful, now declined and continued on the wane; when, in 1720, George returned to Herrenhausen, the formerly omnipotent German favourite attended him there and remained behind in Hanover, appearing no more as an accountable factor in English political life.

By means of this so-called reunion the Ministry, being reinforced by the accession of Walpole and Townshend, hoped to revive its influence, the former statesman having accepted the office of Paymaster of the Forces—a most lucrative post—the latter becoming Lord President of the Council, that position being relinquished by Lord Sunderland.

But, although after a time the virulence of the two factions seemed to abate, yet, at the Court itself, the King and the Prince rarely spoke to one another, and at the first Levee after the reconciliation, the old courtiers stood at the top of the room behind the King, the Prince's friends all at the bottom, which proceeding, as Lady Cowper satirically observes, "made the whole thing look like two armies drawn up in battle array."

Yet, notwithstanding the unrest and uneasiness existing in royal and political circles, the affairs of the South Sea Company, at least on the surface, throve amazingly.

The stocks rose by leaps and bounds. The normal quotation before this period rarely exceeded 100, during the passage of the Bill it gradually increased to nearly 400, and after some fluctuation settled at 380. But by the end of May, 1720, owing largely to the indefatigable efforts of the stock-jobbers, the shares rose to 550, and on Thursday, June 2, attained the astounding value of 890.

Naturally those persons who retained even a semblance of common sense took the opportunity of selling, with the

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 145.

result that the quotation next day fell to 750, at which price it remained until the end of the month.

By this time the mania of speculation secured a firm hold of the British people.

Erasmus Lewis writes to Lord Oxford: "I have heard but one sound these three months in this place, viz. the South Sea, which has got the better of men's politics and ladies' fashions, and has entirely engrossed all conversation";* while another contemporary laments: "the South Sea was like an infectious distemper which spread itself in an astonishing manner." "The fortunes made daily by bargains in this Stock . . . were so many prodigies to men of Sobriety and Discretion; clerks in offices, runners in Exchange Alley, Book-keepers to merchants, Coffee men and coffee boys were seen everywhere in fine cloathes or in laced coats of velvet";† such is the account of an eye-witness, all evidence pointing to the extraordinary gambling frenzy which had attacked the people.

The social and economic condition of the nation conduced to the spread of the mania. The country was very poor; the great influx of trade and commercial enterprise which flowed into England a few years later had, as yet, hardly commenced.

Some giant fortunes, it is true, were beginning to be made, but these fortunate ventures were limited to a few persons only; the bulk of the nation tasted but little prosperity, the period of commercial depression being of long standing. In the reign of William III. the exports of the country fell to one-half of the sum to which they amounted previously, and the load of the National Debt lay heavy upon all, especially the landed and agricultural classes. The wars brought no increment to the country landlord except heavier taxes and increased mortgages, while the labourer and the operative found food dearer and employment more precarious.

The incidence of taxation bore especially heavily on the owner of the soil. The favourite mode of raising funds consisted of the land tax, and although sporadic efforts were made to levy some impost on personal property, yet the attempt never produced material results, partly owing to the persistent opposition of commercial capitalists, partly

* "Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 594. † Oldmixon, p. 696.

to the general ignorance of the principles of finance and an habitual reluctance to adopt new and unconventional methods.

But the weight of the situation imposed upon a portion of the population a strong desire, if not a necessity, of finding fresh sources of income, and, devoid of other opportunities, many people lent a willing ear to any scheme which promised to provide them with the ready money they so sorely needed.

The example set in France found prompt imitators in this country.

New companies sprang up on every side, some few with sound industrial objects: the breeding of horses and cattle, tillage, the improvement of lands, a plan for carrying on woollen manufactures in the North of England—these indeed might have vastly increased the wealth of the nation; and two projects, one called Lord Onslow's Bubble, the other projected by Lord Chetwynd, The Assurance, exist to-day under the well-known titles of the Royal Exchange and the London Assurance. Yet into such a vicious groove had the finances of the country fallen that these valuable enterprises could only obtain their charters by offering, for the privilege of trading, the huge sum of £600,000 to the Treasury, the blackmail being seized with avidity and immediately applied to the debts of the Civil List, which otherwise, much to the distaste of Ministers, must of necessity have been laid before the House of Commons.

Bubbles, to use the name commonly applied to these productions, appeared in all directions, the impudence and effrontery of the promoters only being equalled by the fatuous imbecility of the dupes.

A clergyman, either an egregious rogue or fool, required a subscription of many thousand pounds to start a company for the purpose of discovering the Land of Ophir and monopolising the gold and silver still remaining in that country. A modest inventor asked for a million for a wheel of perpetual motion; another philanthropic person wished to start a company for insuring and increasing children's fortunes; a fourth required two millions for the purpose of making looking-glasses. But none of these enterprising spirits could emulate the example of a finished

student in human nature who, taking advantage of the prevailing insanity, coolly started a company "for the purpose of carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, the project to be disclosed in one month, subscribers of two guineas to be given shares to the value of one hundred pounds." On the very afternoon when the subscription list opened this financier received some two thousand pounds and immediately decamped, leaving the would-be shareholders to meditate as to whether the project tended most to their benefit or to that of the promoter.

So patent were some of the swindles and so gullible the public that Parliament passed an Act restraining companies from exceeding the powers contained in their charters, and, on the day that the Session closed, the King issued a proclamation declaring that all these highly speculative schemes should be deemed common nuisances and, as such, liable to prosecution, a proceeding, however, which caused but little diminution in their number.

All classes joined in the scramble for gain; the Prince of Wales became the Governor of a Copper Company, and, although on the strong remonstrance of the Speaker and Walpole—"who told him that he would be prosecuted, mentioned in Parliament, and cryed in the Alley"—he vacated the post, nevertheless he made £40,000 by the venture.*

Many noblemen and persons of distinction pursued the same course of conduct and pocketed the same profits. "Nothing ever showed more the general corruption of mankind than this did, . . . the whole nation brought as it were to a level and without distinction of birth, titles, offices or age gaping at and grasping unreasonable gain."

That the social effervescence did not produce a political crisis and cause the overthrow of the Ministry, if not the downfall of the reigning family, was due to the temper of "all people of all denominations thinking of nothing but their own losses and flattering themselves in the hopes of some quick turn in the public credit, as they called it, to recover their late fortunes."

If an insurrection had broken out, Speaker Onslow, the writer of the above words, declares that he was "almost persuaded, the King being at that time abroad, that could

* Oldmixon, p. 702.

the Pretender have landed at the Tower he might have rode to St. James's with very few hands held up against him."*

The sums intended to be raised by these schemes amounted to a total of more than £300,000,000, a portentous amount in those days, which exceeded the value of all the real estate in England; moreover the avidity with which many of the projects were supported by the public caused considerable damage to South Sea stock by diverting capital into other concerns.

By opening new subscriptions, by lending money to those who desired to increase their holding, and by declaring exorbitant dividends, never earned or able to be earned in a legitimate fashion, the directors of the South Sea Company, in June, forced the stock up to the abnormal price of £1,000 for each £100 share, a quotation which drew from the Scotsman Lockhart the remark: "Nor is there, I believe, so much species in Europe as what the stock is now screwed up to."†

The King departed to Hanover on June 15, 1720, after appointing, as before, Lord Justices to administer the affairs of the realm; in about a month after his departure the directors issued their third subscription and endeavoured to lure the remaining annuitants into becoming holders of the Company's stock. But although the terms appeared, on the surface, to be most advantageous, the response failed to fulfil the expectation of the promoters, partly because of the greed of gain so deeply imbued into the nation, partly owing to a mistrust beginning, slowly but surely, to arise with regard to the power of the South Sea Association to sustain such a vast enterprise, and also to the attraction which the multitude of fanciful schemes, then being hawked in all directions, exercised over the would-be investor.

Pressed by these circumstances the Company determined to invoke the assistance of the new Act, and proclamations were issued forbidding the sale of the stocks of these illegal undertakings.

In this the directors committed a flagrant mistake; not only did they awaken the hostility of the threatened concerns, some of them of considerable commercial importance,

* "Onslow Papers," p. 504. † Lockhart, vol. ii., p. 43.

but they also drew the public attention to the internal affairs of the South Sea Company itself.

Possibly the gambling frenzy began to subside; indubitably from that time the stock of the Company commenced to fall in price.

On August 17 it dropped to 830; by certain sharp practices a quick rise to 1,000 was effected, but in a few days it fell again to a little above 700, and by the end of the month had declined to below 400. With various fluctuations the depreciation continued and forced those responsible for the management to make tentative efforts for coalition with the East India Company, which promptly rejected the overtures.

The directors next approached the Bank of England, and here they met with more success.

Influenced by Walpole, the Bank, though with great reluctance, agreed to circulate 3,000,000 of South Sea bonds, in the hopes that its own sound financial reputation might in a measure rehabilitate the much impaired character of its rival. But by this time the effects of reckless speculation began to be felt.

The goldsmiths, having lent heavy amounts upon the security of the now greatly depreciated South Sea stock, became embarrassed, some of them stopping payment.

This in turn caused a serious run on the Bank of England, which, consequently, refused to proceed further with the proposed arrangement, the natural result ensuing that the South Sea stock sank lower and lower.

Driven by the threatening position of national affairs and the disturbed state of political parties, the Ministry determined to make urgent representation to the King that he should return at once to England, although they knew full well that such advice would prove highly unpalatable to His Majesty.

Express after express hurried to Herrenhausen until George, alarmed at the reports he received, consented to leave Hanover. Accompanied by Lord Stanhope he reached London on November 12, 1720, and, if some historians are to be believed, left his Hanoverian courtiers in a state of extreme apprehension.

Sunderland, to obtain influence over the King, had long promised Bothmar and Bernsdorff the repeal, if the Com-

mons could by any means be induced to do so, of those clauses of the Act of Settlement which related to the bestowal of titles and Crown lands on foreigners by birth, both the above-named German statesmen being extremely desirous of enjoying the same advantages as those bestowed on the Bentincks, the Keppels and d'Auverquerque, who received their English peerages from the hands of William of Orange.

The chaotic condition of public affairs produced by the impending bankruptcy of the South Sea Company threatened the Teuton courtiers not only with the loss of these coveted honours, but also with the deprivation of the many advantageous opportunities which their close connection with the Sovereign hitherto had secured to them. If, and the danger seemed imminent, disaster attended the dynasty, all hope of prospective reward in any material shape would immediately vanish.

The Hanoverian statesmen, so it has been written, made many wild suggestions—that the King should abdicate in favour of the Prince; that the Prince should yield up his right of succession; that the army should be made secure in its allegiance at any price and a military despotism proclaimed; that the Emperor be petitioned to send a vast force to these shores, and other projects which might possibly have entered the brains of men totally ignorant of the idiosyncrasies of the British race, but could hardly have commended themselves to King George, who, with all his shortcomings, did not lack ordinary common sense.

Any hopes of improving the position of the South Sea Company based on the advent of the Monarch quickly met with disappointment.

The stock, which on his landing rose to 200, fell again immediately to 135. Great misery, greater apprehension existed in all classes of the community—"bankruptcies are as common as empty houses,"* chronicles one newswriter—and the bitterest indignation arose against those responsible for the stupendous edifice of fraud.

"We made them kings and they deal with everybody as such," declares one sufferer, who continues: "Thousands of families will be reduced to beggary, the consternation is inexpressible, the rage beyond expression."†

* Oldmixon, p. 703. † Walpole, vol. ii., p. 190.

The hopes of all the defrauded turned towards Parliament, which, already twice prorogued, was now announced to assemble on December 8.

While the House of Lords maintained a certain degree of judicial calm, the honourable gentlemen of the Commons "let themselves into the most bitter invectives," finally passing a resolution calling upon the directors of the South Sea Company to lay before the House a report of their proceedings.

The attack came as an unexpected blow to the Ministry. Craggs, a Secretary of State—and, as after revelations showed, one of the most culpable in matters relating to illicit dealings in shares—attempted to treat the motion as preposterous, but in vain; the Members would suffer no delay, and the resolution received the assent of the House.

Walpole, with his usual moderation, and pursuing, as ever, the line of least resistance, endeavoured to effect a compromise by which the Bank and the East India Company should share the responsibility of the South Sea stock in the hopes that "a load which would break the back of one mule would be light on the back of three." But Parliament felt little inclination for temporising measures.

On the motion of Sir Joseph Jekyll—a highly conscientious politician who never changed his principles or his wig—the Commons passed a resolution restraining the directors of the accused Company from leaving the kingdom, following up this attack by the appointment of a secret committee of investigation, Thomas Brodrick, an avowed opponent of the South Sea speculations, acting as chairman, his colleagues being as biassed as himself.

The Committee forthwith proceeded to the South Sea House, there inspecting and seizing much documentary evidence which, when embodied in their first report, made most serious allegations against the Company, that the books contained numerous fictitious entries, erasures and alterations, many leaves of the ledgers being missing.

The Committee found, moreover, that stock to the value of £574,500 had been sold before the passing of the Bill for increasing the capital of the Company, and that the names of those to whom it was proposed to transfer these shares had been concealed "designedly, with the intention of making an interest in favour of the Company and to

facilitate the acceptance of the South Sea proposals and the passing the Bills which were at that time depending in Parliament."*

A certain director, on being severely pressed in cross-examination, admitted that he believed the Earl of Sunderland received £30,000, and a second member of the board, the Deputy-Governor, Sir John Blunt, also confessed that Mr. Secretary Craggs approached him with a proposition that "it would be greatly to the interest of the Company if persons of high rank could be engaged to concern themselves in it," so, the sub-Governor, Sir John Fellowes, agreeing, the Duchess of Kendal and the Countess von Platen each received £10,000 of stock, the two nieces of the latter lady obtaining £5,000 apiece.

James Craggs, the Postmaster-General, acquired in this fashion £30,000, and Charles Stanhope £10,000, while the Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Aislabie, through the medium of one of the directors, dealt with no less than £794,541, the stock of the Company.

Pending the publication of this report, the House of Lords proceeded to examine those persons incriminated in the transactions; little progress had been made in their investigation when a tragic event occurred, affecting not only their debates, but even the continued existence of the Ministry.

Sir John Blunt, the Deputy-Governor of the Company, in his examination by the Lords refused to answer certain questions on the ground that the secret Committee of the Commons already had received his evidence, consequently unless he possessed a copy of that to which he had sworn previously, he might be led into prevarication.†

In the long discussion which arose on that which the House regarded as an absolutely unprecedented case, the Duke of Wharton, the disreputable son of an unprincipled father, made a virulent attack upon Lord Stanhope, taunting him with rising to place and power on the dissensions between the King and the Prince, and emphasising the accusation by the declaration that "the best princes were oftentimes made intolerable to their subjects by ill Ministers."

It was a free-living age; excess in all directions tainted the

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 714.
† *Ibid.*, p. 704.

habits of men of rank and position. Lord Harley records that the night before the debate Stanhope, James Craggs, junior, the Secretary of State, the Duke of Newcastle and some others, at the Duke's house held " a great debauch."

" They drank excessively of New Tokay, Champagne, Vimey and Barba Water, thirteen hours as it is said."*

Frequently, in moments of excitement during political discussions or incidents of a similar nature, it is chronicled that prominent personages, such as Walpole, were compelled to desist speaking owing to violent bleeding from the nose, probably Nature's means of relief from the effects of prodigal living. On the occasion of the Duke of Wharton's attack Lord Stanhope rose to reply in a paroxysm of heat and anger, and on the termination of his speech, still in a condition of high agitation, he fell, struck by apoplexy. Although the drastic remedies which the medical usage of the day prescribed afforded him some relief—the word appears a misnomer—he expired about six o'clock the next evening, February 5, 1721.

George received the news of the collapse of his Prime Minister with a singularly individual manifestation of grief. " The news of the death being brought to the King, his Majesty was so sensibly touched with it that he could not eat his supper."†

O tempora, o mores !

Notwithstanding the sudden death of the most competent statesman in the Upper House, the Lords continued their investigations; then, abruptly, the Commons received a report from the secret Committee announcing that Mr. Knight, the Secretary of the South Sea Company, by whose medium, obviously, all the complicated business was transacted, after the first day of his examination fled to the Continent.

The public voice insisted that the Ministry, desiring to shield Knight, induced him to abscond and rejoiced at his disappearance; when difficulties arose over the question of the fugitive's domicile at Brussels, Speaker Onslow made specific allegations that Lord Sunderland gave £50,000 from the Civil List as a bribe to the Governor of the Netherlands,

* " Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 616; Oldmixon, p. 710; " Duchesse d'Orléans " (Brunet), vol. ii., p. 311.

† Oldmixon, p. 710; " Carlisle Papers," Historical MSS., p. 30.

GEORGE II.

A Caricature.

the Marquis de Prie, to throw obstacles in the way of the extradition of the offender.

The flight of the cashier precipitated matters; the House of Commons forthwith, without further evidence, expelled Sir Robert Chaplin, Sir Theodore Gaussen, Mr. Eyles and Mr. Sawbridge, for notorious breach of trust in their capacity of directors of the peccant Company and, upon receipt of the report of the secret Committee, proceeded to take into consideration the case of Mr. Charles Stanhope, one of the Secretaries of the Treasury, a cousin of the late Premier, who stood accused of receiving stock to the value of £10,000, without paying any consideration whatsoever for the same, and also of heavy speculation which yielded to him a profit of £250,000.

The absence of Knight, the principal witness, afforded Stanhope a chance of escape; the evidence of the directors, Blunt, Sawbridge and Holditch, did not prove conclusive; Walpole, who himself had made a great fortune out of the same venture by judicious buying and selling, exerted his utmost influence in support of a colleague whose guilt, if proved, might have provoked more embarrassing enquiries, possibly inducing the fall of the Ministry.

By adroit advocacy Walpole persuaded the Commons to reject the accusation against Charles Stanhope, but the narrowness of the majority, three votes only, demonstrated the strength of the incriminating evidence and the temper of Parliament. Outside, in the streets and among the sufferers from the culpability of the directors, this acquittal "put the town in a flame to such a degree as you cannot easily imagine"; a state of mind which boded ill for the First Lord of the Treasury, Sunderland, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Aislabie, against whom very severe charges were levelled.

If Sunderland fell the Ministry, even the Whig Party, might be involved in the catastrophe.

Every effort, legitimate or illegitimate, must be used to prevent such a calamitous blow to the reputation of Whig statesmen and the replenishment of Whig fortunes.

The report of the secret Committee contained matter touching very closely the Court itself. King George, in some respects, always treated Sunderland as a *persona grata*, so to save him those in authority determined to make

a sacrifice and to throw the cunning, unpopular Aislabie to the wolves. Little indeed could be said in Aislabie's favour; as Speaker Onslow declares, he was so little respected as to fall "almost unpitied by anybody."

Knowing full well in his official capacity of Chancellor of the Exchequer the various decisions of the directors, he speculated heavily in the stock and thus gained illicitly an enormous fortune; also he received shares without paying any consideration for them and, when threatened with investigations, caused the account books likely to incriminate him to be burned or mutilated.

Hardly a Member of the House dared or cared to speak in his defence; Walpole, so eloquent and so adroit in working on behalf of his personal friends, sat "mute as a fish"; the Commons, without a division, declared the accused guilty of "most notorious, infamous and dangerous corruption," expelled him from the House and committed him to the Tower."*

As was anticipated, having done justice in one direction, Parliament showed a more lenient spirit when the conduct of the first Minister of the Crown came under its review.

Walpole moved an adjournment of the hearing, a manœuvre which, being carried out successfully, gave him a longer period in which to bring his unrivalled powers of secret influence to bear.

He put plainly to each placeman and hanger-on of the Ministry, who fed on the crumbs which fell from the Treasury table, the two alternatives: "If you come into the vote against Lord Sunderland, the Ministry are blown up and necessarily will be succeeded by a Tory one."†

The dire prospects of losing their perquisites at once disposed of all Whig scruples; by a majority of sixty-one they rejected the charges against their leader; but to those wretched directors who, not being Whig politicians of high standing, possessed neither power nor patronage; to them no such mercy should be thrown. The same majority which, in the face of almost incontrovertible evidence, acquitted Sunderland, passed a resolution meting out condign punishment on his less guilty colleagues, confiscating all their property, to be applied to the relief of the

* "Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 892; Journals of the House of Commons.

† Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 213.

sufferers by their schemes, remitting only a small portion so that their families and dependants might not be reduced to absolute penury, and leaving the unhappy men not merely disgraced but stripped of all means except a bare pittance.

It proved fortunate for the Whigs that, before the scandals concerning the South Sea Company destroyed the reputation of Stanhope's Government, an acute division had broken their ranks and that some of their leaders escaped the mire of that colossal fraud, otherwise the country in its wrath would have made havoc of the whole party.

But circumstances assisted the Whigs.

The general belief that Walpole, and especially Lord Townshend, kept aloof from the unclean thing—so far as public information went, for Walpole secretly made much money by judicious dealings—afforded the King an opportunity of calling them to the head of affairs with the complete approbation of the majority of the electorate.

For with the death of Stanhope the Ministry fell to pieces.

The younger Craggs died of smallpox a few days after the death of his chief. "A showy, vapouring man" of so little education that Pope recommended him to obtain the services of "Mr. Fenton, a polite scholar, in order to be polished by the companionship,"* he yet filled the office of Secretary of State with an ability far exceeding that with which previously he had been credited, but, vain of his own personal appearance, coarse by nature, living in a coarser age, he affected the fashionable vices, lived high, dabbled in the South Sea speculation, and probably would have been excluded from the Ministry at the next reconstruction. Calling at the house of Lady March, he caught the infection of smallpox from the porter and died shortly afterwards, leaving a name sullied by some equivocal conduct, nevertheless obtaining the honour of burial in the Baptistry of the Abbey at Westminster, and being the recipient of an epitaph written by Pope which would have done honour to a wise and illustrious patriot:

> "Statesman, yet friend to truth, of soul sincere,
> In action faithful and in honour clear,
> Who broke no promise, served no private end,
> Who gained no title and who lost no friend,
> Ennobled by Himself, by all approved,
> Praised, wept and honoured by the Muse he loved."

* "Pope's Letters," vol. iii., p. 414.

Truly in this instance a charitably disposed critic might remark, in the words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Harry of Monmouth:

> "Adieu! and take thy praise with thee to Heaven;
> Thine ignominy sleep with thee in the grave
> But not remembered in thine epitaph."*

His father, James Craggs, senior, the Postmaster-General, survived his son by a few days only. A man of low origin, a footman, a barber, a builder, such being the various occupations assigned to him by his detractors, he possessed many striking abilities and much determination. To him is attributed the manipulation of the South Sea stock; it has been said that, primarily, he discountenanced the whole concern, but yielding to pressure brought to bear upon him by Lord Sunderland, whose instrument he is supposed to have been, he used his business experience and knowledge of human nature to such purpose as to acquire an immense fortune; then, when the collapse of the fraudulent edifice came about, deserted by his influential friends, he found himself left to bear the brunt of the retribution with which an outraged and disappointed people visited the authors of its affliction.

Summoned to appear before the bar of the House of Commons, bereft of the protection and society of his son, whom he dearly loved, he expired suddenly under strong suspicion of suicide—"died of a lethargy," is the announcement of one chronicler, a somewhat euphemistic manner of describing the result of an overdose of opium.

To the intriguing, ambitious Sunderland the scandals of the South Sea Company dealt a heavy blow. He struggled hard to retain his power until the force of public opinion grew too strong for him; he intended to fill the post of Secretary of State, vacant by the death of Lord Stanhope, with a man of his own choosing, but a few hours after that high office lost its tenant the King, influenced by public demand, handed the seals to Lord Townshend, an old antagonist of Sunderland in the past and the only statesman of the day who kept himself totally undefiled by the South Sea scum.

Yet, though out of office, Sunderland retained great influence with George, and when the public voice—such

* "Henry IV," Act I, scene 4.

public voice as existed in those days—called upon Walpole, trusting in his financial ability, to undertake the restoration of the national credit, Sunderland contrived to obtain the nomination to the second Secretaryship of State of Lord Carteret, just returned to England, with a brilliant reputation gained by the success of his diplomacy during the negotiations in Sweden.

Thus once more the dull, dictatorial, mediocre Townshend found himself linked with a colleague of infinitely superior intellectual endowments, the natural result ensuing that soon the old intrigues recommenced and the old division of opinion reappeared.

This gave to Walpole the desired opportunity of asserting his absolute domination over the Ministry and assuming that position in the history of British politics which he retains to-day.

He met with no rivals.

To the average reader the reign of George I. is an era filled by politicians whose names are now barely known, whose achievements are totally forgotten even when, as did Aislabie, they dragged the name of statesman in the mire and defiled English political life by dabbling on the Stock Exchange in a manner disgraceful in a private individual, but unforgivable in a Minister of the Crown.

Among these mediocrities Walpole reigned supreme; once installed in the leadership of the Commons he lost no time in making his influence felt; he continued the method used with effect by Lord Sunderland, that of ensuring the obedience and fidelity of his followers by an unblushing but eminently efficacious system of bribery. To him, as a great writer declares, a personality entirely "destitute of that delicacy of honour which marks a high-minded man," this procedure seemed the natural, indeed, under the then existing circumstances, the only course to pursue.

Walpole's system of corruption in no way resembled that pursued by Danby or the Ministers of Stuart times. He did not give a man a bribe to induce him to support a measure or refrain from opposing some important scheme; Walpole's method struck a far deeper vein of political immorality.

It consisted of the simple but highly effective process of primarily teaching politicians to believe that the only true

object of political life should be found in their own personal aggrandisement, the acquisition of wealth or social position with the minimum of personal exertion, and then firmly instilling into their minds the conviction that the surest road to preferment lay in supporting the administration of which he was the chief agent.

The result of such debased methods soon left its mark on public life.

Even at the commencement of this period the evil bore fruit; the younger Craggs, himself not distinguished for too nice a sense of honour or integrity, uttered a bitter complaint of the lack of conscientious men and the total extinction of patriotic spirit: "I don't see a man but is engaged in some cabal or other; I don't see a man that enquires after the public but as he thinks it a popular handle to support his own or distress his enemies."*

To this testimony must be added the observations of Speaker Onslow, the possessor of unique opportunities for analysing the atmosphere of the political world, who, time after time, expresses his reprobation of the views then prevalent, closing an account of the proceedings of Ministers by denouncing: "I never knew so corrupt a time and which laid such a continuance of it that God only knows when it shall have an end."†

From the King, intent only on drawing as much revenue from the foreign country, as he deemed it, over which an unhappy fate compelled him to rule; from the Heir Apparent, meddling in Bubble companies and making large sums of money from dealing in their stock, by way of the royal mistresses and their supporters, the Cabinet Ministers, to the lowest hanger-on at the back stairs, the whole Court and Government teemed with vice and corruption, equal in depravity to the worst days of the Stuarts, but unrelieved by any of the touches of nobility or high mettle which occasionally characterised that period.

It is this squalid level of vicious mediocrity which renders the whole series of transactions, both political and commercial, connected with the South Sea schemes the most repulsive episode in a most unlovely epoch of our national history.

Sunderland did not acquiesce patiently in his fall. A

* "Stair Papers," vol. ii., p. 39. † "Onslow Papers," p. 509.

man of violent temper, speculative political theories and unbounded ambition, he, still holding the office of Groom of the Stole, obtained an ascendancy over King George more by force of passion than by strength of character or pre-eminence of ability.

But royal favour went far in those days, and many courtiers, thinking Sunderland's eclipse only transient, still remained subservient to his leadership and resisted all attempts on the part of Walpole to attach them to his own followers.

Ever impetuous and wholly unprincipled, Sunderland, on his enforced retirement from office, coquetted with the Jacobites and undoubtedly instilled the belief into the minds of many of that persuasion that he was prepared to use his influence on behalf of the House of Stuart.*

The cabal against Walpole, in the then divided condition of the Whig Party, might have succeeded but for the sudden death of Sunderland in April, 1722, from an affection of the heart. Some colour is given to the rumours of his intriguing with the exiled faction by the complaint of his mother-in-law, the Duchess of Marlborough; on his death she sealed up his "scrutore until his son returned from his travels, but the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal and the two Secretaries of State came and tore off the seals, seized what papers related to public affairs and carried them away, which, as the world says, put the Duchess in a very great passion."† Probably the world spoke truly.

Less than a month after the demise of Sunderland, John, Duke of Marlborough, also died.

Struck by paralysis six years before, he lingered, "a poor spectacle and better dead," until he became but little more than a name to his contemporaries, who cared for nothing concerning him except the reversion of his many offices, and rapidly forgot the memory of his great achievements.

He bequeathed an enormous fortune, a huge unfinished palace to his wife; to the British public he left his reputation, that of the greatest military genius Great Britain has numbered among her sons.

* Lockhart, vol. ii., pp. 68-74.
† "Portland Papers," vol. vii., p. 190.

That the scandals which arose among the rulers of the country and the complete discomfiture of the dominant faction, the Whigs, should greatly encourage the spirit of the Jacobites needs no explanation.

Since the exile of Ormonde and the defeat of the Scottish rebels the management of the Jacobite councils fell into the accomplished hands of Francis Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester. An eminent scholar but more brilliant controversialist, Atterbury for long, even in the reign of Anne, stood distinguished as a fearless supporter of Anglicanism and a high-spirited, dauntless champion of the synodical privileges of the clergy; his advocacy of Convocation, his direct allegations that to the lukewarm spirit of the episcopacy and its subservience to the royal will and pleasure might be attributed much of the marked growth of irreligion and immorality in society, contributing largely to the fear and mistrust with which his fellow-prelates regarded him.

In debate the eloquent bishop met with few rivals.

On one occasion, while advocating a moderate view of a certain question, the drunken, ill-tempered Lord Coningsby interrupted suddenly with the taunt that the reverend speaker, in blessing where he meant to curse, resembled Balaam. Atterbury at once turned the tables on the unwary interloper: "My Lords," he rejoined, "I beg to remind you that the most prominent incident in the career of that prophet was that he met with an unexpected interruption and rebuke from the ass which he bestrode. As your Lordships will bear witness, the noble Lord is the only person who has reproved me on this occasion."

A higher and more reverent instance of his ready and tactful wit can be found in the narrative of how, when Sir William Wyndham, one afternoon at dinner, declared that the shortest prayer on record fell from the lips of a soldier at the battle of Blenheim: "O God! if there is a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!" Atterbury courteously observed: "I know a shorter and better prayer, also made by a soldier who in the heat of battle pleaded: 'O God, if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me!'"

It is evident from the correspondence now available that the continued refusal of James Stuart to be admitted to the English communion caused much perturbation of mind to

the strenuous prelate, who, himself a devoted Anglican, strove to impress on the heir to the lineal succession how greatly his attitude on this question alienated the support of many who, while earnest Jacobites, yet paid even stronger allegiance to the Church of their fathers.

As in so many other cases, the tactless phlegm of George and the studied slights of his Ministers gradually eliminated from the mind of Atterbury whatever intentions he may have conceived favourable to the House of Hanover, for from the year 1717 he became the "manager" of the Stuart cause in England, and bent his best energies towards discovering and profiting by the most favourable moment for attempting the restoration of the legitimate King.

The dissolution of Parliament in March and the confusion and excitement of the consequent election, seemed to provide an appropriate opportunity.

In the spring of 1722 intelligence reached the British Government from Philippe, the Regent of France, that a fresh conspiracy was on foot for the restoration of the Stuarts, the information being given on the understanding that the lives of those especially named should be spared.*

This advice, supplementing the evidence already in their possession, enabled the Ministry to take the necessary steps for defeating the plot.

Six months before, on the last day of 1721, the wife of James Stuart bore him a son and heir, Charles Edward Louis Casimir, to become that picturesque figure of romance, the young Chevalier. Such an event might well awaken the slumbering enthusiasm of those among the people who still held allegiance to the direct line, and on whom the despicable incidents of late scandals must have aroused feelings little to the advantage of the German Prince on the throne and his corrupt and grasping followers.

On May 21 the authorities seized several persons, chief among them being Mr. George Kelly, an Irish priest; Mr. Thomas Carte, a non-juring clergyman of the Church of England; also Plunket, a Jacobite agent of small repute.

Some months elapsed before the Government dared to take the next step and arrest the Bishop of Rochester, against whom, although strongly suspected, little or no direct evidence existed.

* "Onslow Papers," p. 462.

On August 24 about 3 p.m. six messengers arrested Atterbury as he sat in his library at the Deanery of Westminster, "encompassed by his books and papers relating to his private quarrels." Carried before the Council at the Cock Pit in Whitehall, after a short examination he was remitted to the Tower, where he remained for eight months, kept in relatively strict confinement.

Several other arrests quickly followed—the Earl of Orrery, Lord North and Grey, whilst attempting to escape from the Isle of Wight; Christopher Layer, a barrister of the Inner Temple, and Stephen Neynoe, a young Irish priest.

The latter prisoner being confined in the house, bordering on the Thames, of the messenger who secured him, endeavoured to escape; crawling through a window on the second story, he lowered himself by means of his sheets and blankets to the ground, then making a dash for liberty, ran towards the garden wall, sprung over it, and plunged into the river, not knowing the height of the tide, then, being unable to swim, was carried away and drowned.

The evidence against Layer, which for some reason the Government showed reluctance to publish, appeared to be sufficient to ensure his condemnation, but against the other prisoners no definite testimony, presumably, could be found. Layer, respited from time to time, refused to supply the missing information—possibly he knew no more than he confessed—so failing by this means to bring about the conviction of the other delinquents, Ministers left the unhappy man to his fate, and on May 17, 1723, six months after sentence, he suffered the full penalty of treason at Tyburn, his head being affixed on Temple Bar, but his quarters handed over to his relatives for interment.

With all hope of obtaining sufficient legal evidence lost by the death of the two most active conspirators, the Government proceeded against the other prisoners by the unusual and unconstitutional process of a Bill of Pains and Penalties. Even such a confirmed Whig as the historian Hallam allows that the method of conducting these trials formed "a mischievous precedent," but adds in extenuation: "It is, however, the last act of a violent nature in any important matter which can be charged against the English legislature."*

* "Constitutional History," vol. iii., p. 337.

This may be so; but to understand the gross violation of the liberty of the subject which took place under this Government it must be remembered that, by a Bill of Pains and Penalties, a person accused of a political offence did not stand his trial before a judge and jury, acting judicially according to the law of the land, but before a political assembly, the Houses of Parliament, composed, in this case at least, of a majority of those already declared opponents to the act for which the accused person was called to answer, and who, moreover, being the Legislature of the realm, could, and did, shape the law according to their own desired ends.

When, also, the gross and notorious corruption prevalent in the Parliament of this period is taken into consideration it can well be imagined how little chance of escape such a prominent Tory as Atterbury could expect at the hands of a majority dependent for its advancement and preferment on the Government which acted as prosecutor.

Plunket and Kelly appeared first at the Bar of the House of Lords; their case aroused but little interest, and the Bill passed against them by sufficient majorities, their sentence being that of close imprisonment; but the proceedings against the Bishop of Rochester created great excitement throughout the kingdom.

Prayers were used in all the churches for the imprisoned prelate under the pretence that he suffered from gout, and a picture was hawked about the streets showing him stretching his hands through the prison bars and holding forth a portrait of Archbishop Laud, a martyr whose fate he was prepared to emulate.

Historians have stated, chiefly on the authority of Speaker Onslow, that the convicted prisoners owed the comparative lenity of the sentences passed on them to the intercession of the Regent of France and, possibly, to the paucity of evidence against them.

The record of the Whig Ministry shows that no pleasant understanding with a foreign neighbour nor lack of the class of testimony which at that epoch could always be procured by an administration requiring such assistance, would have been allowed to stand in the way of meting out the utmost severity to an opponent so dreaded and disliked as Atterbury.

Very different reasons actuated the Government of King George. In truth they stood in a most difficult situation. They dared not let Atterbury go unscathed, but the remembrance of the last time a King thought fit to prosecute a Prelate hung heavily over them. The memory of James II. and the seven Bishops especially appealed to those who now profited by the Revolution which that act accelerated; even the Whigs of the time of George I. feared to provoke such an outcry as might be occasioned by the execution of a prominent English ecclesiastic.

They therefore chose the milder course, put the law of the land on one side, and proceeded by a Parliamentary process against the accused, being thus enabled to vary the penalties according to the necessities of their own situation.

Atterbury defended himself with eloquence and ability. A contemporary biographer is of the opinion that his speech " has been very imperfectly taken, it wants a great deal of his justness of method and exactness of thought ";* possibly, while declaiming his innocence with impassioned oratory, the knowledge—now shared by the world from the publication of the Stuart papers—of his own participation, for years past, and of his general direction of affairs in the cause of James, must have chilled him with the thought that a complete denial of all complicity in these schemes was unworthy of his priestly office.

Yet his peroration rose to the height of eloquence. It is not difficult to imagine the effect which the stately presence, the full voice, and the perfect utterance of the accused Bishop produced, as in the conclusion of his pleading he declaimed: " If for any reasons or necessity of State, in the wisdom and justice of which I am no competent judge, your Lordships shall proceed to pass this Bill against me, I shall dispose myself quietly and tacitly to submit to what you do; God's will be done; naked came I into the world and naked shall I return; and whether He gives or takes away, Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

The Bill passed—as all knew it would—by a majority of forty, notwithstanding a grave protest from Lord Cowper, the Whig ex-Chancellor, and under the sentence thereby incurred Francis Atterbury, from June 21, 1722, became deprived of all his offices and ecclesiastical preferments,

* "Atterbury: Life and Conduct" (1723), p. 110.

declared incapable of holding any for the future, also being banished the realm on pain of death if he returned.

To a man in ill-health, stricken with gout and stone, this doom became a heavy punishment, more especially as he spoke no modern language except English. Upon his departure from his native land large crowds attended the place of embarkation, kneeling and asking his blessing. Even on such an occasion as this, if popular reports are to be believed, the evil spirit of the age displayed itself. A notorious woman of the town, named Jenny Diver, approached the departing dignitary and with many tears and protestations begged to be allowed to kiss his hand. The request being granted, while giving the caress, the woman managed with her lips to draw from the Bishop's finger his diamond episcopal ring of some value, which she promptly pocketed and then made off. The mob resented the act and ducked the culprit in the sea, possibly with a view of ascertaining whether she possessed the peculiar accomplishment associated with her name.*

Atterbury retired to Brussels, afterwards to Paris, where his dominating spirit for a while ruled the Jacobite counsels, but before long the unstable James resented the interference and the Bishop removed to Montpellier, where, after ten years of exile, he died in 1732, his last moments embittered by the loss of his constant and dearly beloved daughter.

Even in death party rancour followed him.

His body lies buried in the Abbey at Westminster of which he was Dean; on the arrival of his remains in England the Whig Ministry gave orders to search the coffin for treasonable documents, thus desecrating the relics of their enemy and adding another leaf to the long record of despicable and unworthy actions which sully the reputation of Walpole and his associates.

* Doran, "London in Jacobite Times," vol. i., p. 434.

CHAPTER XVI

MANNERS AND MORALS

As the years passed on the King took less and less interest in the management of the affairs of Great Britain, except in so far as they might be used for the purpose of securing his Continental principality.

He longed continuously for the Orangery and the sylvan groves of Herrenhausen, and availed himself of every opportunity of enjoying these pleasures unalloyed, the expenses of the journey being defrayed by the British Treasury.* Indeed, during the last eight years of his rule, except as regards foreign affairs, the history of this country becomes not so much a relation of the reign of George I. as a recital of the excesses of a Whig Ministry.

Absolutely ignorant of the English language, too old to learn, George always spoke French or German, thus erecting an almost impassable barrier between himself and the majority of his subjects, who, generally, knew no tongue but their own.

The necessity of replying to the royal observations, few and far between as they might be, cast a severe burden upon many an assiduous courtier.

Henrietta Crofts, Duchess of Bolton, the daughter of the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth, one night attended the Court at St. James's.

King George stood at the end of the room in his usual dull, phlegmatic manner. To the pleased surprise of the Duchess he suddenly turned to her and addressed her in French:

"You were at the playhouse last night, were you not?"

"Oh yes, Your Majesty," replied the lady with flustered delight at the royal condescension.

"Ah, what play did you see?" enquired the King.

Deeply embarrassed and entirely at a loss to find the exact equivalent in French for the title of Cibber's comedy,

* Treasury Calendars, 1714–1719.

"Love's Last Shift," the Duchess in halting sentences contrived to stammer out that she had been a charmed spectator of "La Dernière Chemise de l'Amour."

Neither the style nor the education of the generality of women attained a high standard; some talented women there were, as in all ages, but the average lady of position exhibited few signs of refined taste or literary aptitude, many of them lacking even the modest acquirement of orthography, although in this direction the men were equally deficient. Caroline, Princess of Wales, was an extremely bad speller, as the Duchess of Orleans did not forget to record, and another fair letter-writer, Miss Fanny Oglethorp, who, together with her companion, Olive Trant, took a not inconsiderable part in the secret intrigues of the Jacobite rising, writing to Lord Mar, tells him that if her sister tried to write English as she talks it, "you would think it an *arebuck* letter," a characteristic method of indicating the word "Arabic."

The receptions at St. James's and the other royal palaces in the time of the Stuarts played an important part in the life of that portion of the nation which was in any way eligible to attend the Court, and, moreover, formed a very favourite centre of political activity, but during the reign of George I. these functions became formal and extremely unattractive, the King standing dumb and self-absorbed, paying little or no attention to the company then present.

However, the royal nature changed when the hour of supper struck; then, to those whom he liked, George displayed comparatively agreeable characteristics. To him the pleasures of the table afforded real gratification; the British Constitution might be an inconceivable nuisance, chiefly intended to annoy the Monarch for the time being, but British punch unmistakably gave satisfaction, and the Minister who could supply the beverage in considerable quantities deserved well of his royal master.

Moreover, the King was willing that his friends should share that which he enjoyed so much himself.

Lady Cowper appears to have stood well in the King's good graces, notwithstanding that she occupied an important post in the household of his daughter-in-law, the Princess of Wales. One night at supper the King ate with gusto some boar's head which, in his estimation, was the

best he ever tasted. That day Lady Cowper by some means especially pleased him, so he directed that as much of the succulent dainty as the royal appetite spared should at once be sent to the young lady as a mark of royal favour and esteem.*

On another occasion, when in Hanover, the woodmen captured a youth of fifteen years of age who lived in the forests a perfectly wild life, climbing the trees like a squirrel, having become a savage both in habits and character. George, interested in the matter, directed that the creature should be brought into his presence, and then proceeded to give him a taste of every dish upon the table " in order to bring him to human diet." " His Majesty gave special commands that he may have such provision as he likes best."†

Grossness in all things characterised the period.

Manners, language, morals, the surroundings of everyday life, showed not only an absence of refinement, but, at times, a positive lack of decency. When the wretched spy, Guiscard, attacked and stabbed Robert Harley at the sitting of the Privy Council, the excited Ministers there present fell upon him and thrust him through and through with their blades, his body, still breathing, being carried to Newgate, where he died. Swift, relating to Stella the end of the squalid episode, writes: " We have let Guiscard be buried at last, after showing him pickled in a trough this fortnight for twopence a piece, and the fellow which showed him would point to his body and say: ' See, gentlemen, this is the wound which was given him by his Grace the Duke of Ormonde, etc.,' and then the show was over and another set of rabble came in."‡

The amusements of the people, the discipline of the troops, the management of the prisons, the habits of the community, all show the social deterioration of the age. Before the dissolution of Parliament a matter highly indicative of the national temper required the attention of the Legislature. Complaints reached the King of the riotous and indecent conduct of an association, founded chiefly by the Duke of Wharton, " the scorn and wonder of the age,"

* " Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 44.
† *Political Mercury*, November, 1725.
‡ Swift, " Journal to Stella," 268.

which called itself the "Hellfire Club," emulating the violent excesses of the Mohocks, its members assaulting and illtreating people in the streets at night, indulging in wicked, blasphemous and obscene pursuits which, apparently, well deserved the description given to them of "horrid impieties."

So great did the scandal become that Parliament passed an Act directed against such vicious conduct, and a royal proclamation forthwith appeared, denouncing these abominable societies and threatening all marks of the King's displeasure on those who countenanced similar proceedings; but the malady required more drastic treatment, and the Earl of Nottingham, always a staunch supporter of the Church and her tenets, brought the matter before the House of Lords, urging, which few could deny, that the growth of atheism, profaneness and immorality threatened the country with innumerable evils and called for strong and prompt remedial measures.

Truly the religious state of the nation had been brought to a very low ebb.

The condition of the Anglican Church in the eighteenth century has long been a subject of reproach, even a cursory study of the social and religious conditions of the country at that period showing how small were the efforts of the clergy, how little they set an example, by their lives and actions, to be followed by the laity of their parishes. The personal condition of the parish priest himself frequently created a gross scandal. Too often the clergy married either the mistress of the patron or the maid of the patron's wife, becoming an obsequious dependent on the Lord of the Manor or Squire of the Parish, devoid alike of dignity, education or spiritual activity, with the logical result of loss of self-respect and slackness of ministration.

The sarcasm of Charles II., who, when the clergy complained that Sectarianism was on the increase, bluntly replied: "This would not be the case if you paid more attention to your duties and less to your dues," applies equally pertinently to the Hanoverian period.

The Bishops, many of them learned and able men, spent their energies in controversies more full of doctrinal points than practical Christianity, and the complete subserviency which the hierarchy of the Anglican Church showed to the

King, who did not belong to their communion except by the fiction of the law; who took no interest in the welfare of the struggles of the faith of which he bore the title of Defender, set an example of subordinating heavenly things to earthly expediency throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Lip service took the place of loyalty, corruption of chivalry; men became a race of free livers and loose thinkers.

It was an age when religious feeling lay numb and cold, when the material things of this life were deemed infinitely more desirable than the problematical joys of the next, and when, in the Church itself, due mainly to the attitude of the clergy, the royal arms upon the gallery received greater reverence than the cross upon the altar.

In November, 1721, George dissolved his first Parliament. It had been granted a prolonged and irregular existence by the Septennial Act, and the contemplation of its demise excited many qualms in the hearts of those official politicians who composed the majority of its members. Sunderland, ever precipitate and impulsive, would have granted it again a new lease of life, knowing that an obedient party would have continued gladly the period of their own power, and fearing that the financial debility induced by the " bubbling disease " would prevent the flow of wealth essential in those days to ensure an electoral victory.

Walpole thought differently. He understood the people of England better than his aristocratic colleague; he knew that the British race would endure much without any practical resistance except murmurs and grumbling, but he also perceived that, fallacious as a general election in those days might be as a genuine test of popular opinion, yet the Englishman believed his Parliament to be the safeguard of the national liberties, and that if, by the action of the Government, he were debarred from the exercise of his rights of electing his representative in the Commons house, the reaction against that Ministry would sweep it away probably for a generation.

Moreover, Walpole, a most resourceful financier, devised a scheme for obtaining the funds necessary for providing an electoral success.

A Government at that period possessed an immense

advantage over its opponent in any struggle in the constituencies.

Lord Cowper, as honest a politician as surrounding circumstances would allow, in a long memorandum which he forwarded to George I. on his accession, makes the interesting admission that "it was seen which way the Court inclined, and thereupon . . . the Whigs had a clear majority, as will always happen whenever the Court has a mind to have it so";* as distinct a confession of undue influence as ever has been made by a party manager. Moreover, later in the same document he continues: "'Tis wholly in your Majesty's power by showing your favour in due time (before the election)"—the brackets are Lord Cowper's—"to one or other of them (the parties) to give which of them you please a clear majority in all succeeding Parliaments."

These deductions, from the experience of an astute wire-puller, were equally familiar to Walpole. He knew the immense influence of Court patronage, if supported by a sufficient supply of ready money, and he allowed no scruples of honour or integrity to prevent his obtaining the necessary material.

The source from which he derived his election funds can be discovered from the perusal of the political tracts of the times, one of which bitterly complains: "The last thing I have to mention is the use that has been formerly made of the Exchequer in our elections. . . . 'Tis extremely hard that money, given by the subject for public uses and for their greater security, should be employed against them in the management of Elections, and that which was cheerfully advanced by the Country to serve a Government, should be used by that Government to destroy that Country."†

That Walpole used funds voted for public purposes for the uses of his political campaign is incontestable; small wonder under these circumstances that he should have caused all records of the distribution of secret service money to be destroyed, the subsidies to German favourites and the suborning of British legislators and voters being achievements which would hardly have recommended him

* Campbell's "Lives of Chancellors," vol. iv., appendix.

† "Art of Parliamenteering," 1722, p. 26.

to the bulk of the British people who supplied the money for these misdeeds.

It must, however, be admitted that the purchase of seats formed part of the usual practice at an election; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in one of her letters advises a correspondent desirous of entering Parliament: "Perhaps it will be the best way to deposit a certain sum in some friend's hands and buy some little Cornish borough";* a process which, if carried out with the national exchequer as a source of supply, provides an easy method of obtaining a majority in the House of Commons for any Government, no matter of what political complexion.

Yet, with all the manipulation of votes and the paucity of voters, public spirit made itself felt now and again, so much so as to prompt such an astute party wire-puller as Walpole to devise precautionary measures against too free an ebullition of popular opinion.

The mob oftentimes took matters into its own hands, wrecked the polling booth, drove the bribing candidate from the constituency and spread a little wholesome terror in the counsels of the suborning borough-mongers. When the control of the electorate rested almost entirely in the hands of the great landlords or of powerful Corporations, the only means the populace possessed of impressing its opinion on the community lay in such demonstrations of violence as might intimidate the few, who were endowed with the privilege of voting, from recording their suffrages in favour of an unpopular candidate.

Walpole, in the election of 1722, introduced the system of personal canvass, which, when combined with almost indiscriminate bribery, he hoped would diminish considerably the democratic influence.

In this to a great extent he succeeded, the Court party obtained much support and Ministers found themselves with an adequate majority in the Commons, thus laying the foundation of that long period of Whig domination which ruled this country, to its detriment, for fifty years, until King George III. in a lucid interval freed himself and the nation from its despotism.

To the prolonged Whig ascendancy this country owes many of the evils of the party system, much of the weakness

* "Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's Letters," vol. i., p. 226.

of its Parliamentary procedure; the long record of short-sighted, self-seeking, electoral corruption and oligarchical tyranny initiated and continued by the party which Walpole consolidated, if not created, has left such a mark upon our national history as to justify the belief that the one unmitigated benefit Mr. Gladstone conferred upon the British people is the fact that, by his Irish policy, he consummated the final destruction of the Whig Party.

Secure in a substantial majority in the Commons and strong in the innate Whiggism of the House of Lords, the Government of Walpole and Townshend proceeded with its legislative designs, meeting with but little material opposition.

Walpole with characteristic adroitness gained two advantages from the South Sea Bubble: he won reputation as the only statesman who openly expressed his disbelief in that scandalous imposture, and, at the same time, he replenished his depleted private fortune by secret buying and selling of stock; but he also established a real claim to the confidence of the people, his chief qualities, common sense, political moderation and undoubted business ability supplying exactly the dominant want of the times.

The nation trusted him, although it did not like him; and as a rule he earned the trust by the moderation of his policy, although he deserves the reprobation of posterity for the shamelessness of his corruption.

For a while Walpole and Townshend continued amicably to administer the national concerns, the former leading the House of Commons and dealing with the domestic problems, much in need of readjustment after the South Sea calamity; the latter acting as Secretary of State for that department of foreign affairs which included the management of the northern countries of Europe. But a source of friction had been introduced into the Cabinet by the inclusion of Lord Carteret, brought about chiefly by the influence of Lord Sunderland. Young, brilliant, honourable, "he lived all for glory and that made him rather more scrupulous than the others in the means he used for his greatness";* such is the panegyric given to him by Onslow, and assuredly the new recruit soon asserted his independence and obtained considerable ascendancy over the King.

* "Onslow Papers," p. 471.

Townshend and Walpole adopted the invariable procedure in those days, that of swaying the Monarch through the medium of the mistress. They paid assiduous court to the Duchess of Kendal—if the French Ambassador, de Broglie, is to be believed; they paid also many other substantial tokens of their good will, derived, needless to say, from the pocket of the British taxpayer.

Carteret, following the same course, secured the interest of the Countess of Darlington and her niece, the Countess von Platen, together with the co-operation of the Hanoverian Ministers, Bernsdorff and Bothmar; but he possessed, in addition, a quality which gave him vast advantages over his co-Ministers—almost from the commencement of their conjunction his covert adversaries—in that he spoke German fluently and correctly. As Macaulay succinctly puts it, they listened to "the mysterious gutturals" which issued from the throat of their colleague, which, for all they knew, might be persuading the King to some course of which they would strongly disapprove, and they proceeded to develop a decided and determined dislike to the young and accomplished statesman who threatened thus to be a most dangerous rival.

Moreover, the new Secretary showed distinguished aptitude for higher politics, a cause of mortal offence to Walpole, who might condone grave injuries but could never forgive great talents, for Carteret could claim that out of the continuous mistakes of Whig foreign policy he personally reaped reputation and distinction.

By the exercise of considerable diplomatic qualities and some adroit manœuvring, he brought to a successful solution the many and delicate problems concerning the cession of the Duchies of Bremen and Verden, together with the long-continued disputes between Denmark and Sweden.

So undeniable had been his success that the Government nominated him, as the companion of Stanhope, to represent the interests of Great Britain at the Conference about to meet at Cambrai.

The death of Stanhope abrogated this arrangement, and the young diplomatist, returning to England, assumed the position of Secretary of State for the Southern Department.

Yet, notwithstanding Carteret's efforts, affairs on the Continent presented an aspect by no means too favourable

for this country. The Treaty of Nystadt between Sweden and Russia brought the Northern War to an end and registered the complete failure of the policy pursued by the British Government, King George, on the testimony of his own Secretary of State, being "mentioned in such a manner as he had reason to resent."*

By the treaty England's old ally, Sweden, ceased to be a great Power, relinquishing all her dominions on the east of the Baltic to Russia, who from that time became the autocrat of those regions, to the serious detriment of British commercial enterprise.

In the south also the essential interests of the nation suffered materially. To conciliate Spain and keep that country constant to the Quadruple Alliance the Ministry allowed the Spanish Monarch to believe that Gibraltar and Port Mahon would be restored to their original owners.

In many particulars the British people at that period were tamely long-suffering and patiently apathetic, but the bare rumour of the proposed surrender of Gibraltar evoked keen resentment in every class of the community. "You cannot imagine the ferment the proposal produced. The public were moved with indignation on the simple suspicion . . . that we should cede that fortress,"† writes Stanhope himself to Schaub, the envoy, in March, 1720, yet in June, 1721, George indited a personal letter to the Spanish King, expressing his readiness to satisfy the demand touching the restitution of Gibraltar and promising "to make use of the first opportunity of regulating the Article with the consent of Parliament."‡

The Court of Spain regarded this missive as "so darkly worded, and that which his Majesty promised so faintly expressed that it really and strictly engaged for nothing," an opinion which Dubois, now promoted to the hat of a Cardinal, with his usual acuteness, endorsed.§

Yet, notwithstanding these doubts, the contracting parties signed the treaty of peace at Madrid within a fortnight of the receipt of King George's letter, a cogent

* Foreign Entry Books, 7.

† "Bourbon Kings of Spain" (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 260.

‡ "Delaval Papers," Historical MSS.; "Parliamentary History," vol. viii., p. 695.

§ Baudrillart, "Philippe V et le Cour de France," vol. ii., p. 460.

argument that the Spanish Government attached some value to the pledge contained in the document.*

For a while peace reigned abroad and tranquillity existed in domestic affairs. The proceedings against Bishop Atterbury had terminated; nothing therefore prevented the prorogation of Parliament, which function George, on May 27, 1723, performed in due state. The solemnity of the occasion created so great an impression on the mind of a foreign visitor to this country that he could only relieve his sensations by the following rhapsody: " When I beheld the King, the best and most just of monarchs, come to give the Royal assent to what the Peers of the Kingdom, or rather the Fathers of the People, had agreed to, I thought I saw Augustus in the Capitol approving the decrees of the Senate and the Senate applauding the action of the Emperor."†

So writes a contemporary admirer, Charles Louis von Pollnitz, but the simile would be more striking and impressive to modern readers if they did not know that this Teutonic Augustus could not understand one word of that which he solemnly approved, and that a singularly astute and unscrupulous Prime Minister contrived to purchase, by places and perquisites, the solemn agreement of these *patres conscripti.*

The King, having performed this impressive function, immediately left the country and travelled to Hanover, accompanied, on this occasion, by both Secretaries of State, Lord Townshend and Lord Carteret.

These two distinguished members of the Administration did not quit England simultaneously owing to the necessity of transacting abroad matters of pressing national importance; on the contrary, no special necessity arose for either of them to accompany King George, although a useful custom gradually came into practice that one Secretary of State should always be in attendance on the Monarch. On this occasion extreme and undignified jealousy of his younger colleague determined Townshend to assure himself of the ear of the King and the co-operation of the paramount mistress; having once before lost his office owing to some undue influence, Townshend frankly

* Lamberty, vol. x., p. 108; Koch, vol. i., p. 250.
† Pollnitz, vol. ii., p. 442.

acknowledged that he would take all steps necessary to render such a catastrophe impossible in the future.

Hanover at that time received the description of being "the only place in the world where faction and intrigue are natural and in fashion." Breathing this atmosphere the elder statesman proceeded, by every means at his disposal, to attain to the good graces of the Duchess of Kendal, and succeeded so far that he felt justified in describing that angular lady as "our good Duchess and our fast friend."

The Court of Hanover in those days vibrated with rumours of coming matrimonial alliances. Amalia, niece of the favourite, Countess of Darlington, was about to marry a young Frenchman, the Comte de St. Florentine, son of the Secretary of State, the Marquis de la Vrillière, connected on his mother's side, the Comtesse de Mailly, also with the family of St. Hermine and Duc de Saintonge. King George, who took a paternal interest in the destined bride, consented to solicit from the Regent, through the agency of Dubois, the grant of a Dukedom for the bridegroom's father, thus rendering the match more brilliant and distinguished.

At the same time whispers of a far more exalted alliance reached the Court circles. King George's daughter, Sophia Dorothea, Queen of Prussia, a persistent but most unsuccessful matchmaker, designed a double betrothal: her daughter, the Prussian Princess Royal, Frederica Sophia Wilhelmina, to Prince Frederick, eldest son of George, Prince of Wales, consequently heir presumptive to the British throne; and, as a second matrimonial venture, her own son Frederick, the Crown Prince, afterwards Frederick the Great, to one of the young Princesses of the English royal family.

The King and the Queen of Prussia visited Herrenhausen on such thoughts intent soon after the arrival of the British Sovereign in Hanover, and George, not moved only by nuptial schemes but also distinctly anxious with regard to the designs of the Czar Peter, whose actions at Nystadt assumed an unfriendly aspect, consented to leave the placid shades of his Hanoverian home and travel to Berlin.

The account of his reception in the Prussian capital is interesting as forming one of the few glimpses history records, which clings to the recollection, of George's personal attributes.

The many narratives extant concerning the Stuart Kings convey to the ordinary reader a distinct picture of their individuality.

The cunning, shuffling, timorous James I.; the most pathetic figure in history, King Charles the Martyr; the witty, popular, free-living rake, more completely misunderstood than any other monarch in English history, Charles II.; and the dull, obstinate, mistaken bigot, James II., are all portraits which live and continue; a faint but striking silhouette of William III., the "asthmatic skeleton," also lingers on the memory, but no material really exists which stimulates the imagination as to the identity of George I., and any details which may envisage him are of interest and value.

Wilhelmina, like many young ladies of rank, kept a diary, and her lively reminiscences give a graphic picture of the times.

She relates how George arrived at Charlottenburg on October 8, 1723, at 7 in the evening. "So soon as he had saluted the King and Queen I was presented to him. He embraced me and, turning to the Queen, said to her: 'Your daughter is very big for her age.'" He gave her his hand and led her into the apartment, whither everybody followed them. "As soon as I came in he took a wax candle from the table and inspected me from head to foot. I stood motionless as a statue and was much put out of countenance. All this went on without his uttering a single word to me." The fair narrator then continues that the impression left on her mind by the King's demeanour was *bien espagnole*, the Spanish attribute apparently being that he was of extreme gravity and hardly spoke a single word to anybody. "He saluted Madame Sansfield very coldly and asked her if I was always so serious, and if my humour was of the melancholy turn. 'Anything but that, Sire,' replied she, 'but the respect she has for your Majesty prevents her being as sprightly as she usually is.' He wagged his head and answered nothing. The reception he had given me, and this question which I heard, gave me such a fear that I never had the courage to speak to him."*

Other members of the family, also Lady Cowper, who frequently met King George, narrate this effect of cold

* "Mémoires de la Margravine de Bayreuth," vol. i., p. 77.

repulsion which he exercised over them, and also bear witness to his extreme reticence in public, although there is testimony to show that among his male friends his tongue became unloosed by supper and he then exhibited signs of conviviality and good humour.

It is possible that, on the occasion described by the Prussian Princess Royal, the extreme unsociability of King George may have been the consequence of impending illness. "We were announced to supper at last, when this grave Sovereign still remained dumb. Perhaps he was right, perhaps he was wrong, but I think he followed the proverb which says: 'Better hold your tongue than speak badly'; but at the end of the repast he became ill-disposed. The Queen would have persuaded him to quit the table, . . . but at last she threw down her napkin and rose; the King of England naturally rose too, but again began to stagger. The King of Prussia ran up to help him; all the company ran bustling about him, but it was to no purpose; he sank on his knees, his peruke falling to one side and his hat on the other. They stretched him softly on the floor, where he remained a good time without consciousness."*

In a *Feuillet* which Carteret despatched to the Council of Regency,† detailing the circumstances of this visit, he suggests that the King's illness "proceeded from the great fatigue of going 16 German miles the first day and 18 the second, his Majesty fasting till night," and states that, after a good sleep, next morning George completely recovered. Probably, however, this attack in 1723 may have been a precursor of the apoplectic stroke which killed him in 1727, some of the symptoms and the surrounding circumstances being, in a degree, alike.

Carteret in this letter further gives an interesting account of the pageants, convivial and military, with which the royal hosts entertained their guests; the "Body of Cadets consisting of about 300 young gentlemen" headed by a weedy boy of thirteen or fourteen years old—whose conduct did not show sufficient robustness to please his coarse-grained, opinionated father, but whom the world knows now as the General of his age, Frederick the Great—performed their exercises before His Majesty, who was "extremely

* "Mémoires de la Margravine de Bayreuth," vol. i., p. 79 *et passim*.
† B.M. Add. MSS. 22524, f. 14 *et passim*.

well pleased with that sight and particularly with his Royal Highness' behaviour, which was highly admired." As a final festivity the host, indulging in his "favourite pleasure," the drilling of his troops, "everything exact and perfect beyond imagination," regaled the British Sovereign with a review at Potsdam of the Great Grenadiers, the battalion there quartered consisting of the "largest and choicest men" whom the Prussian King could inveigle, kidnap or conscript into his service.

Notwithstanding the remarks of the Princess—"Le résultat en fût enfin la conclusion du traité d'alliance et du mariage qui avoit été ébauché à Hanovre"—the visit produced no practical effect.

Queen Sophia Dorothea rarely succeeded in her match-making; on this occasion she failed altogether and the projected engagement in due course terminated, but a tentative and indefinite alliance between Great Britain, Hanover and Prussia grew out of the various discussions concerning the designs of the Russian Czar, and mutual arrangements for assistance, in case of need, were signed by the Brandenburg Ministers and the English Secretaries.

In a few days the phlegmatic King of Great Britain, tired of the festivities, gladly returned to the rural pleasures of his hunting lodge at Göhre.

Here the antagonism between his two Ministers rapidly increased.

The question of the Platen marriage portion, the bestowal of a Dukedom on the prospective father-in-law, occupied the attention of the Electoral Court. Carteret, probably for the purpose of pleasing the King, displaying his accustomed energy in arranging the preliminaries of the grant, gave all necessary instructions for pursuing the matter to Schaub, then British envoy at Paris.

But the reputation which potentially might be acquired by a successful issue of the negotiations possibly would cause the pendulum of the royal favour to swing too persistently in the direction of the young statesman.

If the biographer of Walpole is to be credited, the fear of such an eventuality caused both the elder Ministers to set themselves deliberately to thwart the plans of their rival so as to ensure his downfall; thus they employed "intrigue against intrigue, manœuvre against manœuvre"; they

" fomented the jealousy of the Duchess of Kendal against the Countess of Darlington," the reputed aunt of the would-be French Duchess, and strove, as only politicians of the eighteenth century could strive, by ignoble means to obtain an ignoble end.

Two events militated against the continued influence of Carteret.

The Cardinal Dubois died in 1723. After his death, the influence of Schaub, and consequently of his patron, perceptibly declined, so that, upon the demise of Philip of Orleans in December, 1723, all chance of a successful termination to the proposed promotion of de la Vrillière vanished, the matter terminating, in a somewhat undignified manner, by a letter from King George expressing his desire to withdraw the request.

Townshend and Walpole lost no time in following up this success, with the result that, after a short interval, Carteret resigned the seal of Secretary of State, being appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, in those days the only asylum left for derelict Ministers.

Whilst in all its aspects this intrigue presents nothing but paltry and trivial incidents, highly characteristic of the tone of political life at that period, one interesting episode became involved in it.

Ever since James Stuart dismissed him from the post of Secretary, Bolingbroke strove earnestly and persistently to obtain the remission of his attainder. The English Ambassador, Lord Stair, although a staunch Whig, always entertained friendly feelings towards the Tory ex-Minister, completely reciprocated by the other, Stair on more than one occasion bearing valuable testimony to the good faith of the brilliant exile.

Townshend also, at an earlier date, wrote, in a not unsympathetic spirit, concerning Bolingbroke's desire to return to his native land, and thereupon hopes arose in the breast of the wanderer that the British authorities might consent to rehabilitate him, at least in part, in his former position.

In May, 1723, in the legal jargon of the day, Bolingbroke's pardon in blood passed the Great Seal, though this in no way implied the reversion to him of his estates or the right to resume his seat in the House of Lords.

Lord Stair and Lord Polwarth, two ambassadors, used

their influence with Townshend to bring about this result, and, doubtless, Walpole must have acquiesced, otherwise the return to England of his old opponent would have been impossible.

On his homeward journey report states that he met Bishop Atterbury, departing under his sentence of banishment, and the witty prelate exclaimed: "So we are exchanged it seems," a story probably about as true as many others then extant.

Journeying to London, Bolingbroke found the Whigs firmly established in office, but with deep divisions in their ranks, the Court faction, formed by Sunderland and Stanhope, now being led by the talented Carteret and remaining strongly antagonistic to the residue of the party which owned Townshend and Walpole as its chiefs.

To the latter Bolingbroke offered his services, and a coalition might possibly have been effected, but the "ill blood" created among the rank and file of Walpole's followers by the pardon of their erstwhile most formidable opponent, obviated any hope of a union with the Hanoverian Tories, who, then under the leadership of Wyndham, would readily have followed and, perchance, even preferred the guidance of Bolingbroke.*

Confronted by such difficult circumstances, the returned wanderer thought it prudent to leave England for a while and journey to Aix-les-Bains, ostensibly on the plea of ill health, veritably with the hopes that an invitation to meet the King at Herrenhausen might be procured.

Failing to obtain this much-desired interview, Bolingbroke returned to Paris, willing to help his new allies should the moment prove propitious.

The fine political sense of one so versed in men and things as the Tory statesman at once detected that the faction of Schaub and Carteret lacked the strength necessary to withstand the powerful interest of its rivals, so, on the advent of Horace Walpole, younger brother of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had been sent out on a special mission, he proceeded to offer his services and to impress his importance on the new envoy and thus, vicariously, he hoped, on the Envoy's employers.

Horace Walpole, "the dirty buffoon," to quote the

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 264.

unkindly comment of King George II., feared that the shining qualities of Bolingbroke might completely obliterate his own mediocre worth, that the distinguished Tory Peer intended to become "the canal through which the English affairs of confidence might pass for the future,"* and so "he adhered to the general precaution" he had framed to himself, "not to be led into any matters of moment and confidence under his Lordship's management and conduct," although at the same time he availed himself of all the information he could glean from one who, especially after dinner, spoke with less reticence than wisdom prescribed.

There existed little need, in reality, for the intervention of Bolingbroke. The old French *noblesse* objected to the proposed honour for de la Vrillière, the Duc de Bourbon sympathised with their opposition to the grant, and Walpole by his own unaided efforts could have accomplished his purpose; he therefore felt no gratitude to Bolingbroke and made no effort to recommend him to the Ministry.

Not until May, 1725, did the exiled Tory leader obtain the restitution of his estates and return to live in London, though still denied the opportunity of using his eloquent tongue in Parliament. For the cautious wisdom of his old opponent, Robert Walpole, foresaw how, in those troublous times, a genius such as shone in Bolingbroke might sway the whole policy of the country; therefore, although he put no obstacle in the way of the great Tory recovering his property, he opposed, and opposed successfully, the reversal of the sentence depriving him of his seat in the House of Lords.

Thus refused admittance to the arena most suitable to the exercise of his talents, Bolingbroke, resenting the efforts of those who contrived to inflict this crushing disability upon him, perforce could only employ his pen. This he did with trenchant effect in an endeavour to destroy the supremacy of Walpole and to leave to the world his own ideal of a perfect Government and a patriot King, neither of which, it may safely be added, did he find at that time in this country of Great Britain.

When manœuvred from his office as Secretary of State, Carteret found refuge, as Townshend had done before, in the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. That place of honour-

* "Lord Walpole's Memoirs," vol. i., p. 117.

able exile—if indeed the holder of the office chose to suffer exile, for the Lord-Lieutenant spent most of his time in London, "never appearing in Ireland except when Parliament is called to give money"—offered, as a rule, few opportunities for the exercise of statecraft or the display of any of the higher political qualities.

Carteret, however, on his arrival in Dublin, found himself in the midst of a crisis which boded ill for the designs of a Whig Ministry.

It is the misfortune of the domestic policy of King George I. that, whatever may be the subject, no matter in what direction the ramifications may spread, invariably the whole transaction will be found to take its initiative from the mercenary instincts of some prominent individual, or the corrupt motives of some group of self-interested politicians; indeed, it is not too much to say that, with the exception of the attempt at religious toleration made by Stanhope, every important measure introduced at this period by Ministers in the United Kingdom was prompted by some personal or venal motive.

At the commencement of the Ministry of Townshend and Walpole, Charles Fitzroy, Duke of Grafton, filled the office of Viceroy, until he received a somewhat unceremonious intimation that he must vacate his appointment to make room for Lord Carteret.

During the reign of the Duke—an aristocratic mediocrity who inherited but little of the wit of his royal forbear—the question of the coinage of Ireland became a matter of urgency. No doubt exists that the currency had become inadequate and that the great scarcity of copper coin inflicted grave inconvenience on the poorer classes of the population.

As Ireland possessed no mint of its own, various steps were taken by the English authorities to supply the needful medium, and, after the usual delay, a patent was granted, in 1723, to a certain Mr. Wood, an iron founder resident at Wolverhampton, permitting him to issue copper money to the value of £100,000 for use in Ireland.

From the first issue of these pence a sense of heavy grievance appeared and gradually overspread the whole sister island.

It may be, as a witty Irishman observed of another

trouble, that the Irish nation never knows what it wants and will not be happy till it gets it; in this instance, unmistakably, the granting of the demand impressed the whole people as an unbearable insult.

The primary reasons assigned by the apologist of the Government for this outburst of discontent alleged that some mistaken idea seized the Irish mind that the patent wantonly had been given to an Englishman and not, as it should have been, to a native; that the King, by minting and stamping the coin in London, had treated Ireland as a dependent kingdom; moreover, that the Irish people deemed that exorbitant profits had been made out of the transaction and that the public suffered accordingly.*

In this latter accusation lay the true gist of the matter, the ministerial explanations touching as lightly as possible upon the delicate topic.

The Irish Executive in Dublin at no time took any steps whatsoever relative to this subject of the coinage; Lord Sunderland, on his own volition, obtained the patent as a concession to the Duchess of Kendal, ever greedy for gain; she, in turn, sold it to Wood for £10,000, the prospective profits to the latter being estimated at more than £92,000. Wood soon set to work and, by the end of 1723, halfpence and farthings to the value of £17,000 were in circulation in Ireland.

The Irish Legislature opposed the introduction of the new copper coins with almost unanimous fervour, an action which most faithfully reflected the attitude of the Irish people, who, with true Celtic warmth, began to consider Wood's halfpence as the fount and source of all their evils.

Suddenly in Dublin there appeared a pamphlet, published under the title of "A Letter to the Shopkeepers, Tradesmen, Farmers and Common People of Ireland, concerning the brass halfpence coined by William Wood, hardwareman, with a design to have them pass in this Kingdom; by M. B. Drapier. Very proper to be kept in every family."

The advice appended to the frontispiece showed the intention of the composition: "Very proper to be kept in every family."

To every parent, to every housekeeper on whom devolved the care of a family, this recital of the evils which would

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 370.

fall upon them, evils which would affect their bread and clothing, their common necessaries of life, was calculated to excite genuine alarm.

The first letter put the Irish people in a flame; the others, for there were four of them, produced a conflagration.

Following the line of argument the writer made a direct appeal, first to the Nobility and Gentry of Ireland, next to the "whole people of Ireland," to resist any attempt upon their liberties by the British Government and Parliament. "Were not the people of Ireland born as free as the people of England? Is not their Parliament as fair a representative of the people as that of England? Are they not the subjects of the same King? Does not the same sun shine upon them? Is a man to be a freeman in England and to become a slave in six hours by crossing the channel?" Thus rolled on the torrent of rhetoric, not altogether unfamiliar to the ears of the politician of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but admirably calculated to arouse the passionate fears of a hot-headed race.

The authorities felt bound to take steps against the undaunted pamphleteer, yet in all their councils a certain timidity can be discerned. Every man in the street knew the author of these daring attacks: the Dean of St. Patrick's, Jonathan Swift; and the Whig statesmen still had recollections of the terror cast over their ranks by his philippics during the reign of the last monarch, and the victory he so lately won over the gross partiality of a noted Whig, the Irish Lord Chief Justice Whitshed.

His friends proscribed by Whig Ministers, his party overwhelmed and outvoted by men suborned by Whig corruption, the gloomy spirit of the great satirist overflowed with contemptuous hatred of the party to which he owed all his disappointments and to whom he attributed all his misfortunes.

Bitterly did he rue his fate: "Banished to a country of slaves and beggars, my blood soured, my spirits sank fighting with the wild beasts not at Ephesus but in Ireland."*

Savage as might be at times the satire of Swift, biassed as occasionally were his judgments, those who read him with dispassionate consideration can discern that invariably through all his writings runs a fundamental sense of justice

* *Notes and Queries*, Series I., vol. iv.

and sympathy with the oppressed. He saw in this controversy on Wood's halfpence a chance of smiting his old political enemies; how well he availed himself of it history testifies; but although in his attempts to inflame the Irish people against their Whig rulers he used the grossest exaggeration and misrepresentation of the comparative values of the new coinage, his main contention, the grievances under which the Irish people suffered, contained a vast amount of truth presented in a manner to which no legitimate exception can be taken.

On Carteret's arrival in Ireland he found the public mind completely occupied by the contents of the Drapier's fourth letter: "To the whole People of Ireland."

Carteret in no way lacked courage; such a direct attack on the administration as that contained in the publication could not, in his opinion, be allowed to pass unnoticed. In this determination even the Lord Chancellor Brodrick agreed, but the advice of the Lord Justices, especially that of the outspoken Archbishop King, caused the new Viceroy to pause and consider the situation.

It startled the Viceroy to be told by the Archbishop that the Dean of St. Patrick's—for Swift was known now to all as the author, although the Executive possessed no legal proof of the fact—should be so assured of the national support as to brave the consequences of criminal proceedings, and the impression became emphasised when, upon the trial of the printer, Harding, not only did the Grand Jury return a No Bill, but a second Grand Jury, with true Irish wit, promptly made a presentment—which common report asserted had been drafted by Swift, at the direct invitation of the Jury itself—declaring that all who should endeavour by fraud or otherwise to impose the said halfpence upon the country were enemies to His Majesty's Government.

Carteret, by no means unwilling to emphasise the mistakes of Townshend and Walpole, strongly urged the withdrawal of the patent and the compensation of the patentee, in which advice Archbishop Boulter—as narrow-minded an ecclesiastic as could be found in all England, who had just been nominated to the Primacy by Walpole—perforce concurred, "as people of every religion, country and party here are set against Wood's halfpence."*

* "Boulter's Correspondence," vol. i., pp. 8, 12.

In an angry reply Townshend insisted that the King should not drive a bargain with his subjects, but the clamour increased, so Walpole, true to his guiding instinct to yield whatsoever might be necessary to ensure his own continuance in office, acquiesced in withdrawing the patent.

Wood, ostensibly for the loss of his profits, consequentially to reimburse him for the bribe he paid the King's mistress, received as compensation £3,000 per annum for eight years, amounting to £24,000 in lieu of the great harvest he expected to reap.

To conclude the matter with due solemnity, the Primate, Boulter, moved a resolution in the Irish House of Lords, thanking King George for his favour and condescension in withdrawing the patent; his colleague, Archbishop King, with malicious wit supporting the address and proposing that the word "wisdom" be added to the other expressions, an addendum which the House cheerfully accepted, although subsequently, under pressure, reverting to the original form of gratitude.*

To Swift the grateful Irish populace attributed the glory of this victory, and for many subsequent years the Dean of St. Patrick's held an ascendancy given to few in the hearts of that lovable and illogical people.

While Ireland throbbed with anger at that which she considered an insult to her nationality and a detriment to her trade, Scotland, with even deeper wrath at a more insignificant cause, seemed to be on the verge of rebellion.

In 1713 the Legislature laid a tax of sixpence per bushel on malt throughout the United Kingdom. This impost the Scottish farmers vehemently opposed as "being more than the industry can bear, they have never paid a farthing on it."

The English Members for agricultural districts not unnaturally "roared" at the fact that England paid three-quarters of a million while Scotland paid nothing; they therefore made strenuous efforts to ensure the collection of the stipulated proportion.

But this in no way recommended itself to the thrifty Northern people. "It is impossible," writes Lockhart, "to express the resentment of the Nation at this measure." Indeed the situation became so threatening that Ministers

* "Boulter's Letters."

greatly dreaded the "double ill effect upon the King's affairs" both at home and abroad which disturbances would produce.

Walpole therefore compromised the matter by agreeing with the members to impose a duty of only 3d. per bushel, one-half the sum paid by the English farmer, and he clenched the argument in characteristic fashion by demonstrating that, as the revenue of Scotland only sufficed to pay the necessary expenses of the State, unless therefore an additional amount could be raised, there would be no money to provide the Scottish representatives with their accustomed emoluments of ten guineas a week as "board wages," and he informed them with homely logic that "they must lay their account with taying up their stokins with their own garters," an admonition which ensured promptly the passing of the Act.*

Thereupon serious disturbances arose, only quelled by the tact and firmness of the Earl of Islay, appointed Secretary for Scotland on the enforced retirement of the Duke of Roxburgh, reports alleging that the last-named nobleman viewed the difficulties of the Cabinet with complacent equanimity. Yet the disorders produced one result of far-reaching importance to the State: the disarmament of the Highlands. This difficult task was most efficiently performed by General Wade, who evolved the admirable plan of forming regiments in the King's service of members of the Clans, thus at once gratifying the warlike instincts of a race of warriors and creating a fealty to the reigning Monarch.

The fall of the Duke of Roxburgh, a firm adherent to Lord Carteret, was quickly followed by the disgrace of the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Macclesfield, another admiring follower of the brilliant young statesman sent to gilded exile in Ireland, Walpole pursuing his usual policy of eliminating from the administration, so far as lay in his power, any colleague who did not express obsequious allegiance or should display any talents calculated to provoke comparison to himself.†

Lord Macclesfield, therefore, suffered impeachment for high crimes and misdemeanours, evidence being produced that he sold the office of Master of Chancery for such exorbitant

* Lockhart, vol. ii., p. 141. † "Onslow Papers," p. 514.

sums that the successful applicants for the post were constrained, if they wished to recoup themselves for their outlay, to have recourse to dishonest and tyrannical practices, thus inflicting great and unmerited suffering upon many poor and innocent suitors.

The trial terminated in the conviction of the accused, a fine of £30,000 being inflicted, with imprisonment in the Tower until such time as the amount might be paid, the money being allocated to the relief of those who had been defrauded of their rights.

Although certain palliations may exist for the acts of which Lord Macclesfield was found guilty, the record of his trial affords but another instance of the sordid and mercenary habits which at that period permeated the whole public life of this country, for, happily, occasions are rare in the annals of history when, as in the reign of George I., the chief of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one of the most prominent administrators of the law, can be charged and found guilty of the perpetration of acts tinged with corruption, with illicit commercial speculation, and of a nature totally derogatory to the honour and purity of the national public life.

CHAPTER XVII

HANOVER AND HANOVER

MEANWHILE, on February 1, 1723, the Congress at Cambrai assembled.

As Voltaire remarked, all the cooks and all the ambassadors in Europe met in the small town, and thinking, justly, that, as the political affairs of Europe had waited some years to be settled without much harm accruing, they could wait a little longer, commenced a debate on the procedure the Congress should adopt and the exact degree of ceremony and precedence appertaining to each of the august representatives of so many illustrious nations.

After due deliberation the distinguished diplomatists then present solved several knotty points and embodied their decision in an ordinance, decreeing that each Minister Plenipotentiary should be accompanied to the Sessions by one gentleman only, one Secretary, two pages, two footmen, and—a matter entirely of individual taste—" two Heyducks in Hungarian dress." Strict orders also were issued that the coachmen and other " mean servants "—the *amour propre* of a twentieth-century whip would scorn the epithet—should avoid quarrelling and should wait in the by-streets the convenience of their masters.

Having determined these and many similar important matters the Congress proceeded to business.

The chief questions requiring solution lay in the disputes between the Emperor and the King of Spain concerning their rival pretensions to territories in Italy. By the Quadruple Alliance, to which both powers had acceded, these questions were remitted to the Congress at Cambrai, France and Great Britain acting as intermediaries. But in England a considerable change of opinion began to prevail.

During the reign of Queen Anne and the life of Louis Quatorze an alliance with the Emperor formed one of the cardinal points in the creed of a Whig; to decry such a connection amounted, in the eyes of Whig statesmen, to blasphemy against the principles of the Revolution.

But as the years passed by new opinions arose, and when, by the direct action of the Emperor, England received a blow to her trade, which not only surprised but damaged her materially, public opinion ran counter to the old predilections.

By the Treaty of Utrecht one great advantage accrued to English commerce, the monopoly of the trade with the West Indies; and by the same diplomatic instrument the Spanish Netherlands passed under the dominion of the Emperor.

The Spanish trade formed the most lucrative of England's commercial enterprises, and Spain took great care that such transactions should be directed as the Spanish Government deemed best. Released from Spanish domination the Flemings, keen business people with great aptitude for embarking on wide financial ventures, at once commenced to look out for new markets and to strive to increase the bulk of their commerce.

Austria suffered from the disease of chronic impecuniosity; the Emperor, therefore, always turned a favouring eye on any suggestion which might fill the Imperial coffers.

In 1716 the Marquis de Prie, Deputy Governor of the Netherlands, satirically nicknamed Pillé, for his rapacious conduct, by those over whom he ruled, granted licenses to trade under the Imperial protection with the East Indies to such merchants as consented to pay him £700 to £1,000 for the privilege, a large number of traders availing themselves of the opportunity.

The magnitude of these ventures rapidly increased, greatly to the resentment of the English merchants, for many Scottish and Irish seamen, driven to take refuge in foreign lands by the proscription which followed the Jacobite rising in 1715, offered their services to Flemish shipowners, and under that flag carried rich cargoes to distant parts of India and China.

In 1722, at the suggestion of John Kerr of Kersland, a spy on the Jacobites in the pay of the British Government, and, by his own showing, as unmitigated a ruffian both in appearance and temperament as ever escaped hanging, the Emperor incorporated the Ostend Company, with very extensive powers of trading both in the East and West Indies.*

* Kerr of Kersland, "Memoirs," p. 150.

At once a storm of protest arose from the British mercantile community and the East India Company, for should by any means the Ostend venture obtain concessions regarding Spanish trade, immense vistas opened out of profitable enterprise. With Trieste on the Adriatic holding the southern commercial outlet, and the Flemish ports on the North Sea tapping the El Dorado of the East and West Indies, much advantage might be brought to the inland towns of the Empire, hitherto left derelict, far removed as they were from the main trade routes, and corresponding damage accrue to British interests and expansion.

These fears were greatly stimulated when it became known that the Imperial Court had intimated to the King and Queen of Spain that any direct overtures from them for a mutual understanding would receive most favourable consideration.

Elisabetta Farnese, the Queen, by her peculiar position the slave and yet the tyrant of her super-morbid husband, owing to the exigencies of the situation fell, time after time, under the influence of some dominant mind.

On the disgrace of Alberoni, an adventurer of very different type rose to high place in the Queen's graces.

Jan Willem Ripperdà, a Dutchman by birth, a Spaniard by descent, and Protestant by creed, at the time of the negotiations for the Quadruple Alliance acted as the envoy for Holland. Well versed in commercial intricacies, an able, pushing, blustering person, he yet displayed many more eminent qualities than his enemies attributed to him, and, being absolutely devoid of any principles of either honour or religion, found it quite consonant with his conscience to do or profess whatsoever might conduce to his temporal advantage.

Neither the French nor the English Government stood well with the Spanish King and Queen, they showing but little anxiety to further the ardent wish of Elisabetta that her son, Don Carlos, should be invested with the sovereignty of the Duchies of Parma and Placentia, or to discuss the question of the recession of Gibraltar. Consequently, when, in the autumn of 1724, tentative information reached the ears of Elisabetta of the willingness of the Imperial Court to open negotiations, she despatched Ripperdà secretly, possibly in disguise, to Vienna.

The Congress at Cambrai found considerable difficulty in reconciling the rival claims and titular punctilios of the two most meticulously ceremonious monarchs in Europe, the Emperor and the King of Spain; the same problems confronted Ripperdà, requiring, it might be thought, more delicate handling than could be supplied by the tactful qualities of a self-assertive Dutchman; but the pressure of outside events, the enmity of France, Great Britain and the Northern Powers, the emptiness of the Imperial coffers, and, above all, the persuasive eloquence of the offer of heavy subsidies, smoothed the Imperial pride; so on April 30, 1725, the astounded diplomatists at Cambrai, still eating their dinners and arranging their procedure, learnt the embarrassing fact that the two powers, whose affairs the Congress intended to arrange, had settled their own difficulties and that nothing now remained for the assembled negotiators to perform except to protest and depart forthwith.

The agreement truly had been arranged, and the two contracting powers evinced some desire to ratify the treaty. Yet so deep-seated remained the ancient enmity between Spain and the German Court that, but for a startling event in diplomatic annals, the amicable understanding might never have been consummated.

More than three years previously, in September, 1721, the King of Spain made a proposal that the Infanta, his daughter by Elisabetta Farnese, should be espoused by the youthful King of France, Louis XV. The offer being rapturously accepted by the Regent, the little girl, four years old, left the land of her birth and journeyed to Paris to be educated and acclimatised to the atmosphere of the French Court. At the same time the heir to the Spanish throne married a French princess, Mademoiselle de Montpensier, as unpleasant a young person as even the annals of the eighteenth century presents; also Don Carlos, the eldest son of Elisabetta Farnese, became betrothed to Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, the charming daughter of Philippe d'Orléans, the Regent.

Thus affairs promised closer connection with France, and remained in this posture for some months.

Then dramatic episodes followed in quick succession.

On January 10, 1724, Philip of Spain abdicated the throne; his eldest son by his first marriage, Don Luis, succeeded him

and suddenly, on the last day of August the same year, died of the smallpox; Philip, leaving the palace monastery of San Ildefonso, which he had built and endowed for the special purpose of providing a retreat for himself from the world, resumed once more the reins of power.

In France also death visited the reigning house, the Duke of Orleans dying in 1723, the Regency thereupon devolving upon the Duc de Bourbon.

The question of the succession to the throne, the tender years of the little Spanish bride, and the necessity, for the safety of the realm, that the King, Louis XV., should have descendants, induced the Council of Regency to dissolve the marriage and send the child Infanta back to Spain, the Abbé Livry being deputed to use his utmost skill in explaining the position and smoothing the awkwardness of the circumstances.

The Abbé experienced a singularly unpleasant audience.

The Termagant of Spain, finding her daughter rejected and the splendid alliance dissolved, made no attempt to keep her temper.

Throwing the portrait of Louis XV. on the floor, she stamped upon it violently, at the same time vociferating: "All the Bourbons are a race of devils. Except your Majesty," she added as an afterthought, suddenly remembering that her valetudinarian husband belonged to the aspersed family.

Replying in kind the Spanish Court immediately broke off the betrothal of Don Carlos to Mademoiselle de Beaujolais, and forthwith sent the young lady back to Paris, the relations between the two countries becoming severely strained.

Filled with resentment against the French Ministers, Philip immediately repudiated the offer of that nation to act as mediator at the Congress of Cambrai, and, turning to Great Britain, expressed a wish that the representatives of his Britannic Majesty should alone fill the friendly office which originally had been allotted to France also—a most embarrassing request, as the first result of acquiescence probably would have entailed a quarre with the French Government, the only ally England at that moment possessed.

On the refusal of the English Ministers to entertain this

suggestion, the Spanish Monarch at once sent instructions to Ripperdà to redouble his exertions and, if possible, effect a strict alliance with the Emperor.

After many and contentious interviews with Count Zinzendorf, Prince Eugene and Count Starenberg, the Spanish envoy succeeded in his mission and the Treaty of Vienna, as ostensibly concluded, became known to the European Courts.

As, however, by the published clauses of the treaty, the Emperor, in return for relinquishing his purely visionary claims on the sovereignty of Spain, received many distinct acquisitions, the diplomatic world at once came to the conclusion that some secret clauses existed which might, if known, cast a perfectly different complexion on the whole transaction.

Much inspired information, many important revelations, in due course emanated from diverse sources.

Two Sicilian Abbots, Platania and Caracciolo, men of some position and intelligence, having criticised adversely the policy of the King of Spain, upon being exiled by that Monarch, hied themselves to Paris, and there divulged to Horace Walpole all on the subject of the negotiations they knew, or thought they knew, or pretended they knew.*

Ripperdà himself, lacking all diplomatic reticence, also boasted and threatened, revealing many State secrets which fell upon ready ears.

These reported designs took the form of a scheme that the two Infants of Spain should marry the two Archduchesses, daughters of the Emperor Charles VI., and that the Imperial support would be accorded to the demand for the immediate recession of Gibraltar and Minorca; that, in the event of Don Carlos succeeding to the Imperial throne, France, if vanquished, should be partially dismembered, the Empire annexing the French Low Countries, Alsace and Franche Comté, Spain occupying Roussillon, Cerdagne and Lower Navarre.†

An immutable belief also existed in the minds of the English Ministers, Townshend especially, that both powers contemplated an invasion of Great Britain, with the object of re-establishing the House of Stuart on the throne.

* "Bourbon Kings of Spain" (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 366.
† "Townshend Papers," p. 119.

It is now known, owing to the researches of Monsieur Syveton in the Viennese archives, that on April 30, 1725, Ripperdà signed a treaty of alliance and commercial relations between Spain and the Empire, which, though showing friendly intention, was of a distinctly inconclusive nature.

Stimulated by the return of the little Infanta and greatly irritated by the attitude assumed both by France and England, King Philip again made overtures to Charles VI., which terminated seven months later, on November 5, 1725, in "une alliance très secrète, plus étroite et plus ample, embrassant aussi les mariages."*

Substantially this treaty contained all the provisions which the English Ministers suspected or with which they had gained acquaintance from one source or another, with, however, one notable exception: nowhere in this secret treaty can any reference be found to the Pretender, James Stuart, or to any design for the purpose of attempting to place him on the throne of Great Britain.

Philip and Elisabetta, immediately on receipt of the intelligence that the treaty had been signed, made a peremptory demand for the restitution of Gibraltar, threatening, in event of a refusal, the withdrawal of all the commercial advantages hitherto accorded to Great Britain.

Colonel Stanhope, the ambassador, did his best to smooth over matters, though somewhat in despair at dealing with a Court "governed wholly by caprice or sudden passion." He informed their Spanish Majesties that such an important matter must receive the consent of Parliament, which at that time stood prorogued.

The intricacies of diplomatic usage acted as a veritable stimulant on Elisabetta Farnese, who was endowed at all times with a very determined temper: "Then make your King come back immediately and summon his Parliament. . . . I am convinced that in the two Houses there will not be a single vote against the restitution of Gibraltar. To make the proposal more urgent, offer this alternative, choose between the loss of Gibraltar and that of your trade with the Indies; the question will not admit of a moment's doubt nor suffer the slightest delay."†

Stanhope found his constant conversations with the Termagant of Spain somewhat trying to his patience. The

* Syveton, pp. 143, 283. † R.O. Spain, p. 93.

audience lasted about three-quarters of an hour; "the Queen had the greatest share, who spoke with a great deal of warmth." King George appears to have agreed with the estimate formed by his ambassador of the character of the Spanish Sovereign; His Majesty one day in the circle of St. James's said publicly that it was lucky for that young lady that her father had once had the title of King, otherwise it would have been difficult for her to have proved herself a gentlewoman.*

Obviously the prospect of a marriage between Don Carlos, the son of this determined princess, and the Archduchess Maria Theresa opened a vista of complications so intricate and embarrassing, so subversive of all the plans for the balance of power entertained by the great nations, as to justify completely the alarm experienced by other European States. Don Carlos stood declared by the Quadruple Alliance as the heir in succession to Tuscany and the Duchies of Parma and Placentia; if he married the Archduchess, who, by the Pragmatic Sanction, in default of male descendants, inherited the Imperial throne, the whole of Italy and Sicily would at once become included in the Empire.

Another contingency also arose. Since the demise of Luis, King of Spain, but a few months after his accession, the Crown, on the death of his father, Philip, who, emerging from his monastic retirement, resumed the duties of Sovereign, devolved upon Ferdinand, with Carlos himself as heir presumptive.

Should this heritage actually fall to the lot of the young Prince, in the event of his marrying Maria Theresa, the union once more of the Crown of Spain with that of the Empire would be accomplished and Europe revert to the position where the preponderance of power rested entirely at Vienna.

Also, although a remote contingency, this son of Elisabetta, his father, Philip, being the legitimate successor to the youthful Louis XV., might eventually wear the Crown of France also.

Well might the statesmen of Europe be shaken from their complacent attitude and express angry thoughts and utter disparaging reflections concerning the scheming

* British Museum, Newcastle Papers, Add. MSS., July, 1725.

Parmesan Princess, her embarrassing offspring and her intriguing emissary.

Least of all would the prospect please Great Britain, opening, as it did, a long vista of renewed rebellion at home and hostility abroad at a moment when the country seemed to be about to enjoy a period of undisturbed prosperity.

The year 1724 passed in England in the greatest tranquillity, no domestic difficulties whatever occurring. The House of Commons, with a strong Government majority comfortably ensconced in remunerative offices or fat sinecures, hardly took the trouble to divide on any question and the session remained barren of incident and cheerful in unanimity.

The influence of Walpole grew to a " prodigious " extent not only at Westminster but in the country at large, and the epigram of Defoe twelve years before when visiting Norfolk might well be applied to the sway that Minister exercised over London: " I found myself out of his Majesty's dominions and in the capital city of King Walpole."*

Offered a peerage in 1723, he, with wise discretion, refused to leave the House of Commons, over which he wielded unexampled authority, but obtained the patent for his son, who thus became Lord Walpole, a title afterwards borne by his uncle Horace. Two years later, in 1725, just before the prorogation of Parliament, on the advice of the Minister, the King revived the Order of the Bath and included his councillor among the knights then newly created.

No outburst of chivalrous feeling prompted Walpole to resuscitate the ancient Order; the advantages of having thirty-six red ribands, as well as the much more restricted number of Garter blue ribands, to bestow upon faithful followers appealed highly to a Minister who believed, and believed sincerely, that the art of Parliamentary guidance consisted in finding out the lowest price at which members of either House would sell their adherence and then paying them the same. Obviously, therefore, to have at command a considerable number of rewards which, though greatly coveted, cost the Treasury nothing, was a condition of affairs much to the taste of a frugal Chancellor of the Exchequer.

* " Portland Papers," vol. v., p. 224.

The tranquil aspect of the political sky at home and the threatening storms which appeared on the horizon abroad determined George, ever ready to leave this island, to make another sojourn in Hanover. Accompanied by Lord Townshend, the King left London on June 5, and twenty days later arrived safely at Herrenhausen.

After a recuperative course at the waters of Pyrmont, George returned, in July, midway to his favourite home, and there received an important guest in the person of Frederick William, King of Prussia, with whom came also the Chief Minister of State, von Ilgen.

"The Foreign Ministers at the British Court have been very intent on the matters transacted there, but some letters tell us it was to no purpose and that the result of the secret resolutions taken by their Britannic and Prussian Majesties must be left to the discovery of Time. It is observable that they spent an hour or two together every day in the Cabinet, the Doors shut so that the subject of their conferences is as great a Secret as the Resolutions taken therein. The Prussian Minister has been daily in correspondence with Lord Townshend."*

The interest which the Foreign Ministers took in the conference of the two Monarchs, as described by the special correspondent of a contemporary newspaper, increased vastly when the English Secretary of State deemed himself in a position to promulgate the result of the diplomatic efforts which had just terminated.

Throughout the whole reign of George I. the deduction can obviously be drawn that his Ministers lived under the dominance of a fear that foreign nations, irritated by the policy of Great Britain in Continental matters, would lend their countenance and aid to the Pretender and instigate an invasion of these islands.

That the British Government especially dreaded the effects of the Vienna Treaty is shown in every line of their correspondence, and, although it is now known from the researches of Monsieur Syveton that no foundation existed for their alarm, it is abundantly clear that they fully expected the Emperor to afford his assistance to the Stuart cause.

Coerced by these fears, finding himself in danger of isolation, supported only by France, a tepid ally, King

* *Political Mercury*, July, 1725.

George, sorely against his will and contrary to the advice of his Hanoverian councillors, in December, 1725, contrived an alliance between Prussia, France and Great Britain, purchasing the support of the former power by a promise of guaranteeing to its Monarch, Frederick William, the succession to the Duchies of Jülich and Berg, which the territorial greed of the House of Hohenzollern greatly coveted, but which were claimed, in right of his wife, by the Count Palatine of Sulzbach, whose pretensions the Emperor cordially supported.

Although the conclusion of these negotiations in a degree reduced the disquietude of Ministers, they still, in pursuance of their usual policy, continued to purchase by lavish grants the assistance of troops from Continental Powers to overawe any movement adverse to their rule among their own countrymen. However, in Parliament the Treaty of Hanover evoked but little enthusiasm.

It is hard to understand why the document should have aroused such bitter antagonism in the British Legislature.

"By this instrument Hanover rode triumphant on the shoulders of England," cries Lord Chesterfield, and even Lord Chatham, years afterwards, spoke of it with scathing denunciation.

Yet impartial consideration demonstrates that the British Ministers alone effected the alliances for the benefit of Great Britain, and did so in the face of distinct, if not strenuous, opposition on the part both of King George and his Hanoverian councillors.

All evidence points to the dislike which the King and his German followers evinced for these transactions. The Sovereigns of Prussia and Great Britain felt small love for each other; in fact, George not only hated his son-in-law but also completely mistrusted him, fearing that if more favourable opportunities might arise the Prussian King would at once break his engagement and adhere to whichever side offered him most advantages.

In the default of Prussia Hanover lay open on all sides to invasion; "this reflection has considerably agitated the King's mind, for it is evident that his wish tends to the preservation and augmentation of his electorate and this inclination is so great that he cannot dissemble it."*

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 499.

George must indeed have shown his feelings plainly in the matter to have induced the Spanish Ambassador to write in the above strain; moreover, his tenderness towards his German possessions became so emphatically known to the Imperial Court that the Austrian Empress was prompted to write to the Duchess of Kendal—a Sovereign to a concubine, all-powerful perhaps, but still the mistress only of the British King—and instil into her the fear that conduct such as George seemed determined to pursue would inevitably result in the summoning of the Diet for the purpose of placing the Elector of Hanover under the ban of that Empire of which his German dominions formed a component part.

There appears to have been some skill and knowledge of human nature in the advisers of the Imperial letter-writer, for the communication, which George showed to both Walpole and Townshend, made the King very "uneasy," and produced much effect on the Duchess, completely upsetting all her plans, for by the threatened proceedings she would be "precluded from carrying out her design, which is to retire to Germany and carry away the large sums of money she possesses in England."*

Bothmar and Fabrice, the chamberlain, the most important people in the Hanoverian Junto, now that the star of Bernsdorff had suffered eclipse, made no secret of their desire to keep on good terms with the Empire, and appear to have intrigued, or hoped to intrigue, with Pulteney, the then leader of the opposition to Walpole and the other Members of the Government, himself a firm friend to the Austrian Alliance.

It is not difficult to gather from the debates that the real reason of the animosity displayed by the Tories in Parliament against the Hanoverian Treaty sprung, not so much from the provisions of the document itself, as from a deep-seated and ever-increasing belief that, not only in this instance but in all cases, British interests were sacrificed for the benefit of German ambitions, and the Kingdom of Great Britain had become the handmaid of the Electorate of Hanover. The witty sarcasm of Lord Chesterfield exactly depicts the national feeling: "If we have a mind to prevent the Pretender from ever obtaining this crown, we should

* Walpole (Coxe), vol. ii., p. 500.

make him Elector of Hanover, for the people of England will never fetch another King from there."

The chief motive which stimulated Townshend to exhibit such violent opposition to the Vienna Treaty and urged him to form alliances antagonistic to the Empire undoubtedly lay in the legitimate desire to protect British trade against a most dangerous rival, the Ostend Company; but so little evidence appears to exist of any design either of the Emperor or Spain—apart from the vapourings of Ripperdà—to assist the Pretender in any new attempt against this country, so obviously inopportune did that particular moment seem to be for any such attempt, that it is permissible to attribute to Townshend, and subsequently to Walpole, other reasons for placing, as they did, undue stress upon the hypothetical danger of invasion.

There is evidence to show that George began to tire of his Ministers; he found his prerogative limited and checked in every direction; this he might have borne with equanimity, but he also discovered that Walpole objected strongly to asking Parliament for any addition to the Civil List, and to George the hopes of obtaining further supplies of money alone rendered a sojourn in this country endurable.

Many writers, Pelham and Speaker Onslow among others, specifically assert that Bolingbroke, fretting at total exclusion from the political world, made repeated and strenuous efforts to subvert the influence of Walpole. To attain this end and induce the King to admit him to the royal confidence, the Tory statesman, by the invariable formula then in practice at the Court of George I., heavy bribery, obtained the support of the all-powerful mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, and, although the King resisted the overtures, yet the statement is repeated in many quarters with strong evidence of authenticity that, if King George had lived longer, Bolingbroke would have obtained control of the national administration.

Should this supposition contain any grain of truth, it is a remarkable instance of those fortuitous incidents which the sporting instinct of the Englishman designates "luck," and the pious calculation of the Scotsman's mental psychology, "a mysterious dispensation of Providence," that while the death of Queen Anne deprived the greatest

statesman of the age of an opportunity of displaying his talent for administration, the death of her successor snatched, for the second time, the reins of government from his grasp.

But the suspicion that the Sovereign contemplated taking to his councils one such as Bolingbroke, so antagonistic to the whole trend of Whig policy and aspiration, whose experience and predilections were diametrically opposed to all the designs which Walpole and Townshend harboured, and who, moreover, had so little occasion for cherishing any charitable feelings towards the two Ministers, might well have instigated in the mind of such a very astute intriguer as Walpole—and through him have permeated to his colleague—the desirability of creating both in the King and in the nation a condition of distrust and apprehension with regard to foreign affairs which would render any change of Ministry inopportune and inadvisable.

Truly it was easy to represent the course of events on the Continent as wearing an aspect much conducive to uneasiness on the part of the King-Elector, George.

The Court of Vienna, always in a state of chronic impecuniosity, begged and received large subsidies from Spain;* the secret treaty instilled enthusiasm into both administrations, and the Czarina Catherine, now the ruler of Russia, entered whole-heartedly into the alliance, while, on the other side, Prussia displayed all signs of a quick defection from Great Britain, and the United Provinces of Holland, as usual, exhibited much vacillation and but tepid allegiance to the Treaty of Hanover.

Spain spent large amounts of money in her attempt to influence the Court of Vienna.

The statesmen of the Empire—except in sex, veritable daughters of the horse-leech—immediately met any overtures from powers desirous of friendship with the cry of "Give! Give!"—on this occasion to some purpose, as the subsidies provided by Spain totalled three million florins, more being promised.

The Spanish Government expected the treasure fleet to arrive in Cadiz in June, but, in order to minimise the risk of losing the greatly needed supplies, Ripperdà gave instructions that the bulk of the specie should be transhipped

* Elizabeth Farnese (Armstrong), p. 186.

secretly into small frigates, so as more easily to elude the British fleet which had been despatched to intercept the huge galleons.

The manœuvre failed, for Admiral Hosier, in command of the squadron, carried out his task well; by closely blockading the harbour of Porto Bello for six months he prevented any vessels from entering or sailing, and thus deprived the Spanish administration of the much-desired riches.

But the British sailors paid a heavy price for their success. The mortality among the crews became appalling. The climate was pestiferous, and, owing to the mismanagement of the Treasury, the "Grievance Office," as the sailors dubbed it, the stores fell short, small in quantity, vile in quality, "all stinking and rotten, not fit for men to eat";* consequently, the Admiral and four thousand seamen fell victims to disease during the period that the fleet remained upon that insalubrious station.

Yet the services rendered by the plague-stricken squadron produced the fall of Spain's busy intriguing Minister, for the blockade of the treasure galleons left the Spanish treasury empty.

Ripperdà, "a man of great ideas rather than of great parts," as Lord Hervey wrote with some truth, crippled for want of funds, relying, as most Ministers in that sordid age did rely, on the venality of his opponents, when he found himself deprived of his most potent weapon, failed in resource and lost the favour of his royal mistress.

The arrival of Marshal Königsegg, the Imperial Ambassador, sealed the fate of the Dutch adventurer. The narration, by the Austrian envoy, of his excesses in behaviour and conversation at Vienna completely alienated Elisabetta Farnese from her former favourite; in May, 1726, he found himself suddenly dismissed from the royal service with a pension and completely debarred from participation in public affairs.

The terrors of an evil conscience took possession of the boastful Dutchman. Seeking refuge in the house of Stanhope, the British Ambassador, with his accustomed lack of reticence he there began to pour out confidences, some coherent, some the reverse, but all of sufficient value

* Du Cane MSS., Historical MSS. Report, pp. 34, 35.

to cause considerable embarrassment to the Spanish Court and the agent of its ally, the Imperial Ambassador.

Taken by force from the British Embassy and imprisoned in the Castle of Segovia for two years, Ripperdà at length managed to escape, his personal charms, not obvious to all beholders, having made a conquest of the servant girl of the governor, by whose aid and that of some others, probably also by the connivance of his gaoler, he managed to break out of the place of his confinement and finally to make his way to England.

His after-career did not lack variety.

Finding England unsympathetic he repaired to Holland, the country of his birth. That State not providing sufficient opportunities for his diverse talents, he offered his allegiance to the Emperor of Morocco, and, becoming a Mussulman, is reputed to have rendered good service to his new Sovereign, finally attaining an ascendancy over the affections of that potentate's aged mother, with results which have not been specifically recorded.

The fall of the Spanish Minister, whose manifest weaknesses have somewhat blinded historians to his considerable talents, in no way lightened the troubles which beset the path of King George. In 1726 Prussia seceded from the Treaty of Hanover, possibly out of pique at the refusal of Frederick, the eldest son of George, Prince of Wales, to accept the hand of the lively Princess Wilhelmina—a match on which the Queen of Prussia had long set her heart—but probably because an alliance with the Emperor offered greater territorial aggrandisement to the ambitious head of the House of Brandenburg than he could obtain from the King of Great Britain or the Elector of Hanover. The knowledge of these plans, combined with the disturbed condition of affairs on the Continent, created a most unsettled atmosphere in England; stocks sank in price, commerce languished and general discontent and uneasiness spread among the population.

The fear, ever present to the minds of Ministers, that such social conditions must react detrimentally to the royal house caused a feeling, very prevalent in circles subservient to the royal influence, that only the pressure of war with a foreign power would keep the nation reasonably true in its allegiance to the Hanoverian succession.

Again fortune favoured the Whigs.

Not for the first time nor for the last the representatives of Foreign Powers failed to understand the idiosyncrasies of the British people. A considerable proportion of the nation may oppose strenuously the designs of a Ministry; it may doubt, frequently with good reason, the wisdom, single-heartedness and even patriotism of a Government, and may threaten retaliation in the event of certain measures being forced into law; but, however determined may be the opposition to the domestic policy of those who direct affairs, once let the nation itself be in danger from foreign foes, all internal dissensions disappear, and the people of this country turn with one determination against those from without who threaten national existence or Imperial interests.

The successor to Admiral Hosier, owing to the mortality in the crews and the necessity of refitting the ships, temporarily raised the blockade of Porto Bello; thereupon the treasure galleons escaped and arrived safely in Spain.

The greatest excitement arose in Madrid, the Spanish Court, stimulated by the presence and counsel of many Jacobite refugees, gave vent to the most bellicose utterance and also laid siege to Gibraltar without making any formal declaration of war, being deterred from such a pronouncement by the knowledge that France, bound by treaty ties to Great Britain, must become, perforce, a belligerent, an event desired by neither the French nor the Spanish authorities.

Such preparations and jubilations produced the natural result in England.

Parliament, without demur, passed a supply for the large sum of three millions, voting money for 26,000 soldiers and 20,000 sailors, and although some pungent criticisms fell upon the methods and actions of Ministers, the " violent and almost superstitious zeal," to quote Townshend, which prevailed among all parties against the restitution of Gibraltar, demonstrated that the nation intended to oppose the Spanish operations with all requisite earnestness and energy.

The Spanish Commander, the Count de las Torres, showed but little capability for tactics though much inclination for talk; all the most experienced generals deprecated an attack upon the heavily fortified rock unless the command

of the sea had been first obtained. But the fleet of Sir Charles Wager rode unmolested in the bay, effectively providing for the supply of all necessaries and reinforcements for the garrison.

The attacking force lost men daily, the Duke of Wharton, very drunk and wearing the Garter riband given him by the Pretender, being among the wounded—only, however, in the toe, a hurt which drew from him even more than his usual modicum of obscene language.

The Emperor and Prince Eugene regarded the enterprise as a waste of men and material; moreover, the subsidies from Spain ceased, much to the discomfiture of Austria, and the Czarina, on whom the Spaniards relied for a diversion in the north of Europe, died in May.

No assistance therefore could or would be given to Spain in her useless campaign, and the Imperial Ministers began to express covert opinions in favour of peace. The Hanoverian councillors, the Duchess of Kendal, and George himself, never ceased to long for a reconciliation with the head of the German confederacy. When, therefore, by the intermediation of the Pope, Cardinal Fleury, the French statesman, intimated to the British Government that the Empire felt no desire for hostilities and would be willing to open negotiations both on its own account as well as on that of Spain, the advisers of King George threw no difficulties in the way and preliminaries for the accommodation of all matters in dispute, to be afterwards relegated to a general congress, were signed at Paris on May 20, 1727, and accepted by all parties.

British trade gained by the suspension of the Ostend Company for seven years, and to this extent the country obtained some return for a heavy outlay. In other respects the evil effects of the false policy of the Quadruple Alliance continued, which, though guaranteeing to Hanover the acquisition of Bremen and Verden, only left Great Britain enmeshed in a network of diplomatic engagements in no way beneficial to her interests and, possibly, highly detrimental both to her national and her commercial welfare.

CHAPTER XVIII

VALE

Debarred for two years from visiting his beloved Hanover by the intricate and menacing aspect of affairs on the Continent, George departed for Herrenhausen directly the preliminaries of peace were signed.

He required rest; no longer young, a free liver, like nine-tenths of the men of that period, the agitation caused by the momentous events happening on all sides affected his nervous system and he became very depressed. A fortnight after the signature at Paris of the proposals which heralded the cessation of hostilities the King embarked on his yacht, reaching Holland on June 7 and proceeding next day on his journey to Hanover, spending the night at Delden.

He suffered from the effects of the voyage, having been ill the whole time he was at sea, other unpleasant symptoms also supervening, but after a night's rest he felt better and appeared to have regained his appetite. Always a hearty eater, he is reported to have done full justice to the supper set before him and to have swallowed a large quantity of melon, although one chronicler, anxious apparently to repudiate any suggestion of excess, declares that he only partook of an orange.

Starting on his journey very early the next morning, after driving for some hours, about eight or nine o'clock he showed symptoms of a stroke of apoplexy, somewhat similar in their appearance to those which attacked him four years previously at Charlottenburg, but, on this occasion, with far greater severity. He became paralysed in one hand, no efforts of the surgeon in attendance being able to ameliorate his condition. Gasping, "To Osnabrück," George dropped insensible into the arms of his chamberlain, Fabrice.

Being assured by the doctor that all the symptoms indicated the worst issue, Fabrice, mounting a horse and

directing the coach with its unconscious occupant to follow, rode with utmost haste to Osnabrück to prepare the King's younger brother, Ernest Augustus, Duke of York and Bishop of Osnabrück, for the sad tidings.

Conveyed to the castle, the home of his youth, carried to the same room in which, more than sixty-seven years before, he had been born, King George lay in speechless agony until two o'clock on Sunday morning, June 11, 1727, when he expired in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

For twenty-nine years he ruled Hanover as Elector, and for thirteen years he sat on the throne of the United Kingdom as the first Constitutional King of Great Britain and Ireland.

He was buried at Hanover, with all due solemnity, in the royal vault built by Duke John Frederick, and laid by the side of his father and mother, the Elector Ernest Augustus and the Electress Sophia, his remains being enclosed in a coffin of copper richly plated and gilded, resting on four lions of brass, bearing the two mottoes, "Honi soit qui mal y pense," that borne by the English Order of the Garter, and "Dieu et mon droit," the badge of the Sovereign of England."*

Like many another personage George suffered from the unconscious satire of an inflated epitaph.

After announcing his title, King of Great Britain, Defender of the Faith, and Elector of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the inscription ended with the words: "Optimus princeps; Bello ac paci æque magnus et felix,"† a somewhat invidious manner of recording the achievements of a Prince whose exploits, in both spheres, were less than insignificant.

His memory also has to endure both the undeserved aspersions of his enemies and the unmerited eulogy of his friends, the violent attacks made upon both his private and political life being as unjust as the praises of some of his modern would-be apologists are injudicious.

As a fact, George I. in all things was essentially commonplace, and his reign has left but little mark upon our national records; indeed, it may be pronounced that, during the time of his rule, the history of Europe presents a dead level in political events and, with very few exceptions, a

* *Political Mercury*, July, 1727, p. 267.
† "History of Guelph," p. 463.

dull mediocrity in individual statesmen. The thirteen years in which he sat on the British throne are but a small and uneventful portion of a highly significant period which, characterised at the beginning with a widely spread epidemic of brutality, immorality and coarseness in manners, terminated in that orgy of bestiality, the French Revolution.

The atmosphere of the latter portion of the seventeenth and the early part of the eighteenth centuries coloured the characters of all the actors in them, George in no way escaping the contagion, and presents an era singularly devoid of elevated or refined features. Neither chastity, sobriety nor honour then flourished, the grossness of the times being so manifest that few contemporary writers attempt palliation and many frankly confess the deplorable moral condition of society and the rancorous bitterness of the many diverse interests.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu enunciates an opinion, confirmed by many incidents: "'Twas an age when adultery and false witness were practised with the greatest cheerfulness and assiduity by all classes of the community, and virtue and reputation were as much laid aside and forgotten as crumpled ribbons." Although she was in no respect an unprejudiced witness, yet the private correspondence and the public acts of both men and women living in those times give ample corroboration of that which Lady Mary asserts.

George himself, to a degree, and his followers and surroundings in many particulars, reflected only too thoroughly the attributes then prevalent. In no way did the example of the King or his Court discourage the fashionable vices or inaugurate a moral environment of greater purity or cleanliness.

In the reign of Charles II. the habit of frequenting the coffee-houses led to a diminution in the consumption of wine and spirituous liquors, and though records can be found of orgies among the dissolute cavaliers and, as Clarendon relates, of an immoderate increase in the drinking of healths, yet with the introduction of the general use of coffee habitual drunkenness undoubtedly diminished. So far, however, from the consumption of the fragrant berry being increased with the advent of Hanoverian manners, gin-drinking became a prevalent habit and remained fixed for centuries as a national vice.

Not a page of a diary or a leaf of a letter written by any public man or woman of eminence but bears reference to immorality or drunkenness; so widely did the latter vice exist that even such a charming and refined character as Joseph Addison yielded to the seduction, Lord Carteret declaring that the happiest times he, the statesman, spent were in the society of the author of " Cato " and Sir Richard Steele, " when Dicky had drunk himself down and Addison had drunk himself up."

Swift, embittered by disappointment and warped by incipient disease, may have, at times, struck too savage a note, but, when the atmosphere of the age is considered, the truth of the scathing remark, put into the mouth of one of the characters of " Gulliver's Travels," becomes apparent: " The human race is the most pernicious race of little vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the face of the earth." Although an opinion which has been advanced must be treated with reserve, that Swift obtained his idea of some of the denizens of the Land of Houyhnhnms from the Courts of the smaller German Duchies—no evidence existing that he ever visited these principalities or had opportunities of doing so—yet he might well have obtained the inspiration for his mordant satire from the recorded actions of certain of these princely Yahoos, whose souls were imbued with sausage and their brains fuddled with beer, for extracts can be found from the correspondence of high-born personages which would support any such inference as Swift has drawn, however low in morality or vicious in conception.

The letters of the Electress of Brandenburg, sister to George I., in which she states that her young son is so austere and brutal in behaviour that she designs, deliberately, to lead him into immoral courses, in the hopes that some appreciable result might be obtained, since " l'amour polit l'esprit et adoucit les mœurs,"* is an example of innate grossness of thought and obliquity of vision which does not stand alone.

Lockhart of Carnwath, on being told that he would hear something scandalous which would make his hair stand on end, replied that " in an age that was not very nice," it must indeed be something " strang " to do that;

* Kemble, p. 171.

and it is doubtful whether in any other period a correspondence could be found which contains so much malice, evil speaking and slandering, combined with such fœtid obscenity, as that which passed between those two high-born and exalted ladies, the Electress Sophia and her niece, the Duchess of Orleans.

Truly it was an age which was not very nice.

Both in the letters and conversation of English ladies of birth and breeding, moving among, presumably, the most refined surroundings in this kingdom, words and expressions can be found which, if heard in the servants' hall of to-day, would blanch the locks and wrinkle the brows of those estimable matrons who control the destinies of the Girls' Friendly and other kindred Societies. Language and the meaning attached to it, it is true, depend to a wide extent on the manners and taste of the age. The fair letter-writers of the British aristocracy in the eighteenth century can plead the custom of the times in extenuation of the coarseness of their expressions, but the above-named German princesses cannot advance any such excuse for the unparalleled grossness not of their words alone but of their thoughts, exuding, as they do, an atmosphere of innate immorality and disgusting lubricity which could only spring from the spontaneous bent of their own mental and physical natures, not from the effect of surrounding circumstances.

The men of the times call for neither admiration nor respect, the greatest among them being deformed by some mean or paltry vice, the lesser possessing neither honour, high-mindedness nor veracity; while there is little in the record of the women which appeals to the chivalry of posterity. The Billingsgate vehemence of Sarah Jennings, the unwashed graces of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, find their counterpart in the smug self-sufficiency, the unconscious narrow-mindedness of Lady Cowper, whose diary, full of allusions to her neighbours, occasionally witty, generally uncharitable, becomes at times undesignedly amusing in its complacent hypocrisy, as when, deprecating love of dress in others, she professes: "I don't care a farthing about setting myself out, and I hope always to make it my Study rather to adorn my Mind than set off a Vile Body of Dust and Ashes"; these lofty reflections

being a corollary to an acrid denouncement of another member of the royal household who "had a Mind also to have some of my Jewels, which is pretty impertinent," more especially as "I was often forced to borrow on these Occasions myself."*

Jealousy and intrigue, bitterness of party and religious strife, as Pope points out, permeated all classes of society and seem to have warped the kindly attributes of the people. If an increasing degree of prosperity had not then commenced, it may well be surmised that the political dissatisfaction and the widespread unrest would have led to serious effects upon the established authorities.

To this uneasiness the personality of King George appreciably contributed, perhaps more than any other factor. The affability of the Stuarts made them popular with the masses of their subjects, and their habitual custom of mingling with their people gave them a hold upon the national affection which stood them in good stead in times of difficulty.

But George I. possessed none of the qualities likely to ingratiate him with the inhabitants of this country; he never learnt the incalculable value to a monarch of personal popularity.

The conditions influencing the behaviour of a Duke of Brunswick were very different from those which surrounded and moulded the conduct of a King of Great Britain; George came to these shores too old and too obstinate to appreciate the change of environment or to attempt to accommodate his own idiosyncrasies to the needs of his new sphere of action. At home in Germany he spent almost all his private hours at Herrenhausen or at his hunting seat at Göhre, living, as his predecessors lived before him, in the limited circle of the Electoral household and in pursuit of the individual aims of the Electoral existence.

Here in England, at the earliest opportunity, he betook himself to Kensington Palace, which he preferred to all other English residences—"the King likes Kensington mightily, 'tis so much liker his gardens at Hanover than those at any other house," writes one of his courtiers to the Ambassador at Paris; and on another occasion it

* "Lady Cowper's Diary," p. 76.

is recorded that the gardens at Kensington were always "searched by soldiers as the King liked to wander there alone."*

The Court festivities were neither numerous nor gay.

Lady Cowper's description of the stiffness and dullness of the Drawing Room at St. James's Palace gives a graphic picture of the lack of sympathy between the Royal Family and the Court circle, while an even more striking illustration of the aloofness of the King is furnished by Pope in one of his letters: "I can easily believe that no lone house in Wales is more contemplative than this Court; I need only tell you that Mrs. L. walked with me three or four hours by moonlight, and we met no creature of quality except the King, who gave audience to the Vice-Chamberlain all alone under the garden wall. In short, I heard of no ball, assembly or bassett table, or any place where two or three are gathered together except Madame Kilmansegge, to which I had the honour to be invited and the grace to stay away."†

Though the disinclination of George to change his habits caused the want of geniality in the royal entertainments, among his few private boon companions his demeanour changed. At the house of Walpole he frequently spent many hours in convivial pursuits, when Horace Walpole, the younger, distinctly alleges, he not only talked but also swore like a trooper in high German. The chief delight of these meetings consisted in potations of punch, a decoction of which, so the Reverend Mr. Etough tells us, the King was "excessively fond," though the reverend gentleman leaves to the reader to determine whether the excess consisted in the partiality displayed for the beverage or in the quantity of it consumed.

The deflection of the first two Sovereigns of the House of Hanover from the domestic concerns of the British people over whom they were called to rule extended to the domain of literature and art; practically, neither Monarch took any interest in either pursuit, consequently little or nothing remains to identify their reigns with these great branches of national mentality.

The thirteen years of the sojourn of George I. in this

* Doran, "London in Jacobite Times," p. 40.
† "Pope's Letters," vol. vii., p. 203.

country, in truth, form the end of that brilliant period which existed under Queen Anne and, after a short lapse, vividly revived in the reign of her second successor. But yet the rule of the first George, from the point of view of literature, will always be remembered if only from the fact that two books of perennial vitality then first saw the light: Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" and Swift's "Gulliver's Travels"; indeed, with regard to the latter, in the opinion of some, George himself, by introducing certain Teuton habits and customs to the author's notice, may have assisted, vicariously, in stimulating the creation of its most celebrated characters.

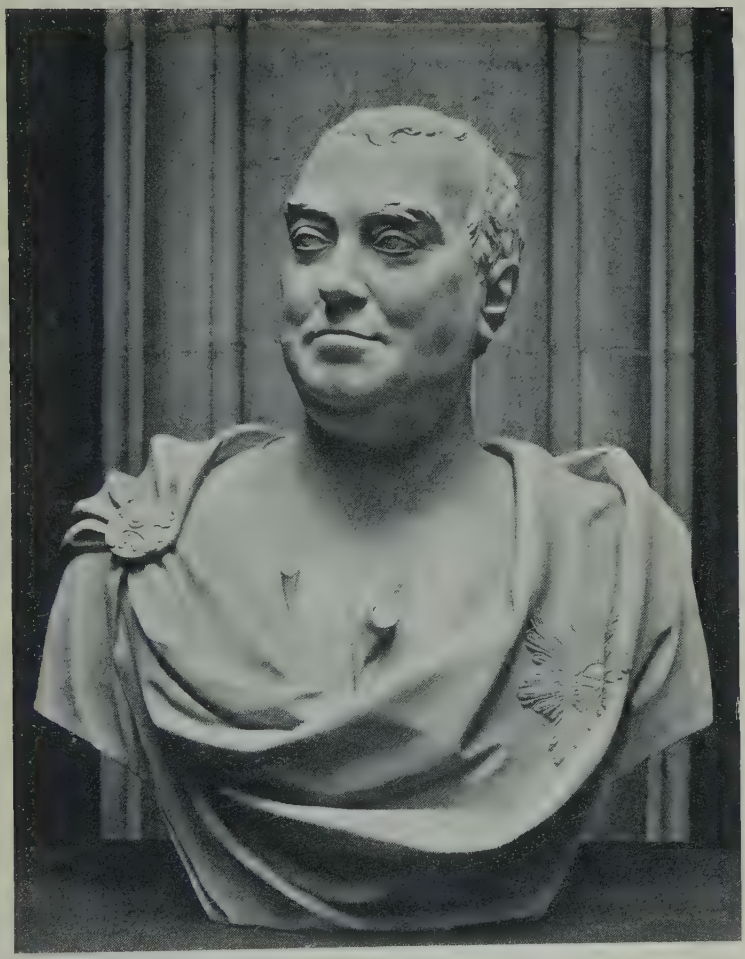
In the realm of music, however—the only art for which George showed the slightest partiality—the advent of Handel and the patronage shown to him by the royal circle marks an epoch, and laid the foundation of that form of musical composition, the Oratorio, which has since become so identified with the English school of musical thought.

As a rule, in dealing with his Ministers or his courtiers, the King displayed great unsociability and much reticence, partly owing to the self-engrossed quality of his mind and his little care for polite graces, but chiefly from his complete lack of knowledge of the English language and his absolute ignorance of the British Constitution. "Nothing so much disgusted the people of Britain at the Elector than his being ignorant of their language, and his saying he was too old to learn it or to change his manner," writes a Jacobite emissary, and, though the source of the remark may be tainted, the substance of it was true.*

George came to this country, at the age of fifty-four, a German Prince, and he remained a German Prince and nothing else for the thirteen years he sat on the British throne.

Herein lies the cause of much of the injustice which has been done to him by most historians in the past, and provides the fallacy upon which some of his apologists to-day have raised a superstructure of excuse and laudation for his conduct as King of Great Britain. As a German ruler his whole interest centred in his German dominions; he ascended the British throne at a time when the aggrandisement of those hereditary territories depended on the

* "Stuart Papers," vol. iii., p. 404.



SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

From a bust by John Michael Rysbrack.

pursuance of a certain policy; he struggled, and struggled successfully, to force that policy into operation, with the result that, by the assistance of Great Britain and through the advantage derived from her resources, he obtained the object of his wishes, the annexation to his Electoral dominions of a large and valuable tract of territory.

As an English King his action, then and subsequently in the same direction, admits of no excuse; as a German Prince he behaved in the most natural manner conceivable. But the knowledge that the foreign policy pursued by George outlined exactly the course of conduct advisable in an Elector of Hanover, but impolitic in a King of England, created a body of opposition during his reign and that of his son which might have changed the whole destiny of this nation but for the fatal ineptitude which marked the then representative of the Stuart cause.

The people felt and openly declared that the interests of this country were being sacrificed for the enrichment of Hanover; that, in the Northern War, Sweden, a nation which always professed friendship to England and lived at peace with her, had been attacked and robbed so that the King's German Duchy might be benefited.

To such accusations there could be no logical answer; but the guilt of these proceedings lay not with the Monarch, ignorant of the feelings of the people, alien to him, over whom he ruled, and deeply obsessed with the desire of augmenting his hereditary demesne, but with the British Ministers, who, against their better judgment, as is shown in their correspondence, and purely for the purpose of maintaining their own and their party's ascendancy over the Sovereign, allowed him to pursue a course which might have proved disastrous to their country.

It is the custom of a certain school of writers on history now to follow the example of Thackeray in his perfunctory sketch, "The Four Georges," and declare that George himself, at that period, was so indispensable to the nation that any reasonable sacrifice which could retain his presence was not only justifiable but even patriotic.

Such sacrifice, as a fact, never was necessary.

There is no evidence worth naming to show that George I. ever really intended to abdicate, except an excitable letter from Lord Stanhope, written with a specific purpose; more-

over, there is every reason to believe that George, Prince of Wales, would gladly have availed himself of the opportunity of stepping into his father's place, and, at that early stage of his sojourn in this country, the substitution would have been agreeable to the nation, owing to his attempts at speaking English and his continued efforts to acquire popularity.

George, the father, showed great jealousy of his son and endeavoured to curtail every occasion where a risk might occur of the Heir Apparent usurping any of the functions of the Crown. He knew full well the many vicissitudes which attended the succession of his House to the British throne, and although during the life of his mother, Sophia, he showed but little interest in the matter, the cause of this negligence lay more in the uncertainty he felt concerning the chance of his ultimate accession than in any real indifference to the splendid future which spread before him.

But although King George in no way contemplated resigning the crown which devolved upon him, those who prepared the way of his succession must have known that complications inevitably would arise from the dual sovereignty of the British and German dominions, and should have been prepared for every embarrassment which the situation might provide.

They not only were cognisant of all the existing circumstances but stood in a position to profit from the experience of the past.

By the advent of the House of Hanover with a purely Parliamentary title the prerogatives of the Crown to a large extent became effaced, and the compact body of Whig Lords the *de facto* rulers of the country. They were conscious that the intrigues, the evasions, the whole mass of dissimulation which marked the conduct of every prominent statesman of the times, including Godolphin and Marlborough, when the succession lay open to question, sprang from the knowledge of the difficulties which would arise from placing on the throne of Great Britain one so heavily disqualified for the position as the Elector of Hanover. Some of them, at least, knew also how fluid the opinion of William of Orange remained on this subject, how he varied from time to time in his choice of the individual he intended to succeed him in the kingly office, and how many candi-

dates could be found for that honour, at least as well qualified by connection to the direct line as the House of Hanover. But the hopes, first, that Anne might bear an heir, and subsequently that James Stuart might signify his adherence to the Church of England, kept statesmen of both parties uncertain as to their ultimate course, finally leaving masters of the situation that handful of Whigs who, for purposes of their own political ascendancy, consistently supported the family named in the Act of Succession.

If James Stuart could have evinced the faintest capability for the position to which he aspired; if, instead of a Mar and an Ormonde, he could have found a Clarendon and a Monck, George would never have held the sceptre of Great Britain.

The dread that even if one Pretender were defeated another pretender might arise, with claims to the throne far better than those of its occupant, caused the advisers of George perpetual anxiety and brought about the result that for the whole of his reign the nation lay under the domination of an army, not, as in the days of the Commonwealth, of their own countrymen, but composed almost entirely of foreign troops.

Fully aware of these pregnant facts the statesmen who held the Sovereign in leading strings committed not only a fault, but a political blunder of the worst description, in permitting the King to pursue a policy of foreign aggression which tended to make him and his household hateful to the people at large and an object of enmity to the old allies of Great Britain.

Happily for the continuance of the dynasty, in this conjunction the personal and political deficiencies of George individually served his purpose even better than the possession of brilliant qualities. The absence of distinct talent in this King—and it may be said also in his son—proved their salvation, for, by keeping them out of the public eye, it prevented the discontent and unrest, which from time to time prevailed, being visited on the reigning family; unrest which, in the case of an active and talented ruler, might have produced a conflict between the Crown and the people.

At the time of the South Sea scandal, the attack against

the Prince of Wales and the German ladies of the Court, the Duchess of Kendal, the Countess of Darlington and the other female favourites, began to take a very personal tinge, the King himself not being spared:

> " God in His wrath sent Saul to trouble Jewry,
> And George to England in a greater fury;
> For George in sin as far exceedeth Saul
> As ever Bishop Burnet did St. Paul,"

wrote a witty rhymester, voicing the opinion of a large proportion of the population, while against the German favourites, who had excited so acutely the animosity of the mob, the invective became embittered to a degree.

A very outspoken article appeared in *Mist's Journal*, which not only attacks the honesty and integrity of those ladies but casts very disparaging reflections upon their personal appearance, calling them by the appellation then and now in vogue for abandoned women, and adding the epithets " old and ugly," the whole attack culminating in the scathing sentence: " We are become a prey to rascally peddling Jews, to petty brokers, the scum, the Offscouring of foreign nations and to the dregs of our own."*

Yet though these attacks met with much popular applause, the effect soon died away, largely owing to the action of one man, Robert Walpole.

Whatever injury Walpole may have done to our Parliamentary Institutions, whatever corruption and subservience he may have introduced into the public life of this country, the House of Hanover largely owed to him its escape from the dangers which beset it at the end of the first decade of its rule.

Nevertheless, to all who have seen cleaner times, the aspect of affairs then could in no way be deemed a pleasant picture. It was an unlovely age.

The dull, undignified, unregal Teuton on the throne; the coarse, foul-mouthed, corrupt Minister at the Treasury; the venal, brutal, meanly intriguing crowd of politicians and courtiers, " a world of shouldering and hunching people," present a spectacle which adds nothing to the elevation or ennoblement of our national life; yet both the King and the Minister possessed, at least, one quality, that of utility,

* " Parliamentary History," vol. vii., p. 806.

which, at the period, the welfare of the nation urgently required.

The chief characteristics of Walpole exactly filled the needs of the moment—common sense, political moderation and considerable business ability. The disaffected among the people remained quiet owing, as the Jacobite correspondence continually complains, to the ever demonstrated presence of a large army, practically loyal to the reigning dynasty; but the wise administration of Walpole turned this condition, at first one of mere quiescence, into a state of distinct acquiescence.

The great wave of prosperity which flowed over the country in the latter years of King George's reign, a period correlative with the commencement of Walpole's administration, conduced appreciably to this state of affairs. "Even the poor men lye warm, live in plenty, work hard and know no want," is the testimony of a contemporary observer who, in 1728, barely one year after the death of George I., makes the statement: "The commerce of England is an immense and almost incredible thing."*

But before this period, in 1720, the growth of the national trade, both export and import, largely increased, the American colonies yielding considerable profit to Great Britain. Several provincial cities, especially Liverpool, enlarged both their limits and their enterprises with corresponding widening in the volume of trade, the well-being of the people, and the number of the population.

These circumstances reacted in favour of the statesman who, while he contrived to remain on good terms with the King, continuously grew more popular with the proletariate. His care of the commercial and material interests of the nation undoubtedly gained him great influence among all classes, and to this confidence, which the Minister contrived to create, the Sovereign owed the stability of his throne.

Yet the evil effects of Walpole's system long permeated the Parliamentary life of this country. He reduced the members to the condition that, if they desired a continuance of their public careers, they must perforce beg the unhallowed alms of the Court or receive, like hirelings, the wages of iniquity from a Minister. By sedulously

* "MacCulloch's Tracts."

declaring that the Tories were Jacobites and, as Lord Harvey asserts, "by giving the title of Tory to everyone who opposed the will of the administration or whom they had a mind to make disagreeable at Court,"* Walpole paralysed all legitimate independence of thought and feeling, instilling into the minds of the younger men the belief that the only road to political distinction lay by way of the Ministerial doorstep or the back stairs of the royal palace, with the natural result that the influence and reputation of Parliament waned and dwindled, and the standard of public life in England never before or since sank so low.

In one respect during the reign of George, by a fortunate discovery and the praiseworthy efforts of a lady, the material welfare of the people benefited to an incalculable extent. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, having seen the operation of inoculation against smallpox performed in Turkey, introduced it into England, where, as the obituary notices in the newspapers show, the virulent scourge destroyed many valuable lives every month. In August, 1721, Doctor Deidier by royal decree inoculated in Newgate six criminals condemned to death, three men and three women, varying in ages from twenty to thirty-nine years. Except that one woman, Mary North, had an attack of vapours, to which she was ordinarily subject, all the patients did well and the operation pursued that course which now is known as normal.†

To be inoculated soon became fashionable, two of the little princesses, Anne and Caroline, undergoing the process, and the hopes of escaping the dreaded scourge, of evading the disfigurement which threatened the beauty of every human being, caused large numbers of all classes and ranks in society to make application for the treatment.

The Metropolis at this time increased considerably in size, the western suburbs being so enlarged that Chelsea waterworks were established, and, moreover, the whole quarter then, as now, known as Hanover and Cavendish Squares gradually arose. The land in this area being offered in plots, many well-known peers, Lord Harcourt, the ex-Lord Chancellor, among the number, acquired portions in order to build for themselves family mansions. Lord Harcourt became the possessor of a double site at

* "Lord Harvey's Memoirs." vol. i., p. 4. † B.M. Sloane MSS.

the western end of Cavendish Square upon which he erected the fine house known for so long by his name. Although, doubtless, the growth of these new residential areas conduced both to the wealth and the magnificence of the Metropolis, the manner in which they were designed and erected did not meet with universal favour.

Baron von Pollnitz expresses an opinion that they "would be more beautiful were it not for the fancy of adorning them with gardens, which perhaps is owing to the want of stones for paving them. As these are encompassed with iron palisades they look very much like Churchyards."*

Other adornments of the Metropolis also excited the satire of the worthy Baron, perhaps for sounder reasons. He declares, an undeniable fact even in the twentieth century, that, in London, "Sculpture is of all the arts the least cultivated," and then criticises with great severity the effigy of Queen Anne erected in St. Paul's Churchyard. "The Queen is there represented with all her Regalia. She holds in her right hand a sceptre, but it is so much like a Wax Taper that one would almost sware she was performing an Amende Honorable, and really the statue is unworthy of the Queen whom it represents, of the Church before which it stands and of the City of London by whose order it was erected."†

That Charles Louis von Pollnitz possessed some taste is demonstrated by his utterances concerning two other statues, a hideous image of George I. "on horseback of lead, gilt and indeed very ill executed," and that of Charles I., which still exists, and which the writer declares with conviction to be "the best in London," an opinion in which connoisseurs will heartily agree. Of this latter statue Pollnitz also states that the "horse, which is one of the boldest pieces that is to be seen, was cast by the same workman that cast the horse of Henri IV. in Paris, but the statue of the King was by another hand."‡

With regard to the statue of King George it has long disappeared, as, in truth, have all other effigies of the first Monarch of the House of Guelph except the figure which is perched upon the top of the spire of the church of

* Pollnitz, vol. ii., p. 438. † *Ibid.*, p. 433.
‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 249.

St. George, Bloomsbury, and which, obviously, inspired the couplets:

> "When Henry the Eighth left the Pope in the lurch,
> The Protestants made him the head of the Church;
> But George's good subjects, the Bloomsbury people,
> Instead of the Church made him head of the steeple."

Owing the security of his throne chiefly to the efficiency of the army, George paid much attention to the military forces of the kingdom, both with regard to the material and the discipline. He introduced, it is true, many of the cruel and debasing punishments then prevalent in Germany, where the training of the soldiery rendered certain countries, Prussia especially, a byword for brutality; but in other respects his innovations tended to the improvement and efficiency of the troops. An excuse, moreover, even for the excessive severity of the British King, can be found in the notoriously bad character of the individuals then drafted into the army, it being recorded on trustworthy and impartial evidence that "half the highwaymen and footpads were members of His Majesty's regiment of Guards."*

Many of the customs, by which appointments to the Forces were utilised solely for the purpose of obtaining salaries from the national exchequer as an endowment of certain families, were ruthlessly discontinued by George. He abolished the abuse by which children in their nurses' arms received military commissions which afterwards they sold, putting the price into their own pockets; and in 1718 he issued a regulation—which gives a curious insight into the manner in which money supplied by the public found its way into the possession of those in authority or their dependants—that: "No minor shall be entitled to half-pay unless he be over sixteen years old when his regiment, troop, etc., was reduced. No person shall be entitled to half-pay unless he actually served in the Regiment."

Modern writers, while crediting George with certain qualities of good nature, common sense and honesty, especially praise him as a singularly merciful Monarch, basing his claim to this attribute on the small number of persons he caused to be executed after the Jacobite rebellion of 1715.

As has been recited before, while certainly not pursuing

* Doran vol. ii.. p. 36.

such a policy of bloodthirsty revenge as stained the actions of James II. after the rebellion of the Duke of Monmouth, yet the record of the executions of the supporters of the cause of the exiled Stuarts amounted to the rigorous total of thirty-four, while hundreds of poor wretches were sold as slaves to the West Indian plantations, a fate, in such a climate, tantamount to a death penalty.

But an act which furnishes a complete denial to the merciful character of George can be found in the abominable sentence passed, in 1719, on Matthews, a young printer, who suffered all the tortures of the penalties for high treason for issuing from the press a pamphlet advocating the claims of James Stuart on the grounds "that all Parties now acknowledge the Pretender," as the Tories believed in Divine Right and the Whigs in the aphorism, "Vox populi, vox Dei," and certainly the voice of the people was in favour of James III.

This poor lad, tried under a Statute of Anne, never before put into force, for printing—not writing—a tract composed in a would-be jocular manner, which could have had no practical effect upon popular opinion, even if seriously intended, was, with the cognizance of King George, done to death in a manner reserved hitherto for the most treasonable practices.* A letter of Lord Townshend is extant in which he states that the King required all death sentences to be explained to him personally before signing the warrant, therefore it is no injustice to George to impugn him, in this instance, if not of deliberate cruelty, yet of extreme and inexcusable callousness.

This quality of cold selfishness, complete indifference to all things which did not concern himself personally or affect matters relative to his own designs, formed such a distinct ingredient in the character of King George as to impress all who knew him or came in contact with him, causing the earlier writers, other than the official Whig historians, always to present him in the most unfavourable light, making no attempt to understand his peculiar position, invariably describing him, in his capacity both as a monarch and man, as a bad King, "the most notorious adulterer and the most unscrupulous libertine in his dominions."†

* "State Trials." † Jesse, vol. ii., p. 291.

With equal inequity modern authors have gone to the other extreme.

Making every allowance for the personal bias against George which may have actuated certain contemporary writers, the characters of this Monarch penned by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lord Chesterfield, Lady Cowper, and his relative, Charlotte Elizabeth, Duchess of Orleans, depict a man of singularly unattractive manners and unamiable disposition. The accounts of his individual doings and sayings are scanty in number and meagre in detail; nothing, however, has been discovered which contradicts the estimate of his nature formed by the above-named witnesses, all of whom had personal dealings with him. In addition there are facts, known and authenticated, which corroborate the unfavourable impression: the treatment he accorded his mother, the unrelenting cruelty he displayed to his most unfortunate and ill-starred wife, his unworthy and undignified conduct toward his only son, leave a stain on his memory no attempts of laudatory biographers can efface, no consideration of political difficulties can minimise.

In other directions he deserves more favourable consideration.

He came to this country a man of formed character, past middle age; he found a system of political conditions which he never could understand and which he profoundly disliked. It is to his credit that he did not attempt seriously to subvert the constitution of the country, although it trammelled and bound him, but accepted loyally, though certainly not approvingly, the situation to which he owed his Crown.

That the continuous danger which threatened his tenure of the throne subdued and mitigated his own individual tendency towards autocracy is indisputable, but, whether intimidated by the threatening surroundings or careless of the concerns of a nation for which he had no sympathy, he never attempted to transgress the limit of his constitutional power or to assert the prerogatives hitherto attached to the sovereign office he bore.

For this he is entitled to the gratitude of the British people, for, being the first Constitutional King, by his tacit acknowledgment of the conditions under which he ascended the throne, he assisted materially in establishing our present

Constitution and ensuring to the nation such benefits as it may enjoy under it.

To the other virtues ascribed to him he has no claim, except in the opinion of those encomiastic authors who, because of the manifold virtues of Queen Victoria and her successors, consider it necessary to be unduly adulatory of the first members of the House of Hanover who ruled this land, forgetful of the fact that the Guelphs derived their claim to the possession of the British throne from their progenitor James I., a Stuart, who in turn acquired his crown in right of his ancestress, Marguerite Tudor, a scion of the House of Lancaster.

Time in its course strengthened such a line of succession by welding into it the remembrance of long association between the monarchs and their subjects. Events of the past half-century have forged anew many unbreakable links. The virtues, the moral ascendancy of Victoria the Good; the brilliancy, the far-seeing statesmanship of the Seventh Edward, established a strong and a permanent right to the loyalty and gratitude of the British people; but the present occupant of the throne, whilst deriving his title from the ancient rule of the Tudor and the Stuart, has founded, in these democratic days, a deeper claim, a surer foundation for his dominion in the lasting and the loving allegiance of that great Empire whose sovereignty he has borne, whose sorrows he has shared, whose triumph he has consummated amid the ruin and the wrack of Armageddon.

Kings of England and Great Britain have waged battles for the sake of national aggrandisement or for the attainment of personal ambition; it has been reserved for George V. to win the surpassing glory of leading a united Empire to victory for the freedom of the civilised race and in the cause of universal liberty.

TABLE I.

George, Duke of Brunswick-Lüneburg = Anna Eleonora of Hesse-Darmstadt.

- 1st son, Christian Louis, Duke of Celle; died without issue, and was succeeded by
- 2nd son, George William, Duke of Calenberg, afterwards Duke of Celle. = Eleonore d'Olbreuse.
- 3rd son, John Frederick, Duke of Calenberg; died without issue.
- 4th son, Ernest Augustus, First Elector of Hanover. = Sophia, daughter o Elector Palatine.

Sophia Dorothea = George Louis (Gorg Ludwig), Elector of Hanover, King of Great Britain.

TABLE II.

George William of Celle = Eleonore d'Esmière d'Olbreuse.

Sophia Dorothea = George I., King of Great Britain.

- George II., King of Great Britain.
  - George V., King-Emperor.
- Sophia Dorothea = Frederick William, King of Prussia.
  - Frederick the Great, King of Prussia.
    - Ex-Kaiser William.
  - Sophia Dorothea Marie = Prince Eugene of Würtemberg.
    - Sophia Dorothea Augusta Louisa = Paul, Czar of Russia.
      - Czar Nicolas of Russia.

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INDEX

Abbots, visit of Sicilian, 354
Act of Settlement, 72, 75, 82, 108, 110, 144, 229, 287, 307
Addison, Joseph, 80, 127, 244, 253, 285, 289
Adolph of Sweden, Prince, 6
Ahlden, Castle of, 46
Aislabie, Chancellor of Exchequer, 162, 285, 296, 312
Alberoni, Cardinal, 240, 248, 252, 253 *et seq.*
Alliance, the Grand, 65, 76, 89
Amadeo, King of Savoy, 65, 105, 253
Anglican Church, 327
Anna, Princess of Savoy, 112
Anne, Queen, 1, 20, 57, 71, 79, 81, 83, 94, 103, 114, 120, 184
  death of, 121, 122, 123, 125
  letters of, 99
Argyle, Duke of, 179, 182, 183, 187, 189, 206, 234
Atholl, Duke of, 175, 179
Atterbury, Bishop, 122, 125, 148, 203, 318, 320, 322, 323
Augustus of Saxony, King of Poland, 40, 210, 212
Augustus, son of Electress, 56
Austria, House of, 54
Austria and Italy, 216, 254, 255

Baden, Prince Louis of, 57, 62, 86
Bank of England, 306, 308
Bath, Order of, revived, 357
Battle of Blenheim, 63, 80, 85
  of Bridge of Conz, 18
  of Brihuega, 226
  of Frauenstadt, 210
  of Glenshiels, 263
  of Gran, 55
  of Malplaquet, 39, 90
  of Neuhausel, 55
  of Nierwinden, 59
  of Oudenarde, 89
  of Passaro Cape, 258
  of Preston, 181, 182
  of Pultava, 210
  of Ramilies, 85
  of Sheriffmuir, 182
  of Steinkirk, 58
Bayreuth, Margrave of, 86, 87
Belgrade, Siege of, 222
Bentinck, Count, 52
Berkeley, Lord, 132, 244
Bernsdorf, Count, 33, 124, 154, 217, 246, 284, 297, 301
  on the divorce, 45
  the Junto, 118
  his alleged designs, 223
  his subterfuges, 265
Berwick, Duke of, 1, 90, 97, 111, 168, 169, 175, 192, 193
Birch, Rev. Mr., 140
Blunt, Sir John, 309, 311
Bolingbroke, Viscount, 96, 99 *et seq.*, 127, 148, 169, 184, 193, 339, 361
  Secretary of State, 95
  correspondence with James, 110
  ruin of his schemes, 122
  letter to King George, 123
  his character, 159
  his flight, 161
Bolton, Duchess of, 324
Bonet, Prussian resident, 163
Bothmar, Baron, 99, 232, 255
  his influence, 124
  his character, 142, 154, 223
  his fall, 300
Boulter, Archbishop, 345
Bourbon, Duke of, 353
  House of, 54, 75
Boyer, Monsieur, 104, 126
Breadalbane, Earl of, 178
Bremen, Duchy of, 131, 211, 212, 238, 252, 266, 332
Brett, Miss Anne, 294
Brodrick, Irish Chancellor, 345
  Thomas, 308
Broglie, Count, 146, 152, 332
Bromley, Speaker, 127, 131
Brückenberg, Countess of, 116
Brunswick-Calenberg-Göttingen, 4, 55
  -Lüneberg, 4, 55
  -Wolfenbüttel, 4, 55
Bubb, Envoy to Spain, 251, 252, 256
Buckinghamshire, Duke of, 80, 203
Burnet, Bishop, 49, 65, 68, 69, 163
Buys, Dutch Ambassador, 97
Byng, Admiral, 168, 258, 259

Cadogan, Lord, 113, 187, 230
Cambrai, Congress of, 332, 349, 352

Cambridge University, visited by George, 247
Carlos, Don, 258, 351, 352, 356
Caroline, Princess of Wales, 117, 147, 233, 276, 294, 300, 325
Carpenter, General, 180
Carteret, Lord, 264, 265, 315, 331, 334, 338, 347
Cellamare, Prince of, 260
Celle, Duchy of, 32, 54
Charlemagne, Emperor, 3
Charles II. of England, 12, 18, 49, 94, 105, 136, 141, 166, 200, 286
II. of Spain, 72
XI. of Sweden, 209
XII. of Sweden, 176, 209, 212, 214, 223, 240, 254, 260, 263, 268
son of Electress, 57, 62
Chateauneuf, Marquis de, 219, 241
Chesterfield, Lord, 43, 138, 274, 276, 281, 360
Christening episode, 277, 278
Christian, Louis, Duke, 5, 14
son of Electress, 63
Clarendon, Lord, 125, 126, 131
Cobham, Lord, 215
Collins, Anthony, 16
Colt, Dutton, 25, 34, 62
Compton, Spenser, Speaker, 159
Coningsby, Lord, 161, 318
Constituencies, Parliamentary, 157, 158
Conyers, M.P., 72
Cowper, Lady, 40, 43, 178, 197, 284, 290
at the coronation, 148
opinion of Lord Wintoun, 200
favourite of King George, 225
Cowper, Lord, 159, 195, 246
Lord Chancellor, 80, 135, 290
memorandum to the King, 329
Council, Cabinet, 150, 151
Craggs, James, Jun., 98, 122, 126, 292
opinion of Junto, 265
South Sea Bubble, 296, 308
epitaph, 313
Craggs, James, Sen., 98, 246, 314
Crequi, Maréchal de, 18
Cresset, 35, 40, 44, 46, 48, 54, 63, 70
Czarina, Catherine, 362, 366

Danby, Earl of, 52, 53, 315
Dankelman, Brandenberg Minister, 62
Darlington, Countess of, 146, 147, 293, 294, 332
Dartmouth, Earl of, 82, 95, 134
Daubenton, the Confessor, 267
Daun, Marshal, 90
Debt, National, 53, 296, 297
Defoe, Daniel, 77, 102, 119, 374
Derwentwater, Earl of, 177, 182, 196, 199
Devonshire, Duke of, 72, 135, 171, 203
Disaffection to Dynasty, 163, 305
Dohn, Count, 283
Dorchester, Lady, 148
Dorset, Lord, 125, 126, 133, 208
Dubois, Cardinal, 97, 219, 220, 257, 262, 284, 333, 339
Dunblane, 182, 183
Dunkirk, 105

Election, General, 80, 156, 319
Eleonora Ulrique, Queen of Sweden, 263
D'Esmier D'Olbreuse, 23, 26, 43, 47, 67
birth, 31
marriage, 27
Duchesse of Celle, 30
Elisabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans, 142, 219, 257, 284
her tastes and character, 30 *et seq.*
letters, 40, 43, 44, 46, 63
Electress Palatine, daughter of James I., 3, 6, 12
Farnese, Queen of Spain, 250, 258, 267, 351, 353, 363
Emperor of Austria, 30, 57, 120, 254, 366
Empress of Austria, 360
England under the Stuarts, 49
Ernest Augustus, Elector of Hanover, 3, 5, 34, 45, 48, 66, 147
Bishop of Osnabrück, 14
character, 9, 25
marriage, 9
created Elector, 60
his will, 61
Etough, Rev. J., 22, 243
Eugene, Prince, 59, 86, 87, 88, 90, 366
Executions, 1715 rebellion, 193, 195, 208

Fabrice, Count, 360
Farnese, Odoardo, Duke of Parma, 249, 267
Fleury, Cardinal, 282, 283, 366
Forster, Thomas, Jacobite leader, 176, 177, 178, 181, 182, 199, 201
France, 98, 217, 252, 270, 295, 296
Frederick Augustus, son of Sophia, 17, 55, 61, 62
Barbarossa, Emperor, 4
Elector Palatine, 3, 6
King of Denmark, 78, 211, 213

Frederick Augustus, Prince, son of George II., 147, 272, 335, 364
the Great, King of Prussia, 71, 335, 337
William, King of Prussia, 35, 64, 77, 131, 211, 215, 358

George I. (George Louis), 44, 58, 61, 72, 77, 84, 86, 88, 99, 105, 108, 130, 159, 170, 213, 243, 247
appearance, 17, 19, 139, 140, 274
birth, 2, 9
burial, 368
character, 20, 42, 43, 47, 48, 85, 105, 136, 137, 156, 198, 199, 253, 272, 373
coronation, 147, 148
death, 367, 368
desire for the Duchies, 131, 211, 212, 230, 252, 268
desire for military distinction, 47, 48, 87, 89, 90
disembarkation in England, 132
entry into London, 133
first visit to London, 23
habits, 136, 153, 324, 326, 372
Hanover, farewell to, 131
returns to, 206, 334
hatred of his son, 207, 233, 280, 286, 299, 376
household, his, 140, 141
habits of his, 145
lack of graciousness, 198, 208
language, 139, 151
marriage, his, 35
mistresses, his, 15, 138, 140, 145
music, love of, 153, 374
reception at Charlottenberg, 336, 338
religion, 287
tastes, 21, 55, 85, 140
visit to Cambridge, 247
to Oxford, 21
will, 281, 282, 283
George II., Electoral Prince, Prince of Wales, 67, 71, 74, 75, 82, 86, 89, 107, 108, 233
birth, 35
character, 136, 234, 272, 275, 288
contemplated journey to England, 112
family, his, 147, 280, 335
progress through southern counties, 233
quarrel with King, 207, 286, 299
South Sea speculation, 304
George, Duke of Calenburg, 4, 61
Prince of Denmark, husband to Queen Anne, 94, 124
George William, Duke of Celle, 5, 26, 46, 66, 74, 77, 84, 281
character, 6
marriage, 27
Gibraltar, possession, 105, 365
proposed cession, 270, 333, 355
Gloucester, Duke of, son of Queen Anne, 54, 67, 68, 69, 71, 286
Godike, Secretary, 125
Godolphin, Lord, 80, 84, 94, 101
Göhre, hunting box, 66, 229
Gordon, General, 188
Görtz, Swedish Chancellor, 97, 217, 238, 239, 240, 260, 264, 268
Gourville, de, French Envoy, 33
Grammont, Conte de, 29
Grote, Otto von, 57, 60, 106
Gualtier, Abbé, 97, 111
Guardian of the Realm, 233, 284
Guelph, House of, 9
Guiscard, 160, 326
Gustavus Adolphus, 209
Gwynne, Sir Rowland, 83
Gyllenburg, Count, 237, 238, 239, 240

Halifax, Lord, 52, 82, 112, 135, 163
Hamilton, General, 186
Hanmer, Sir Thomas, Speaker, 127, 159
Hanover, 54, 105, 359
Harcourt, Lord Chancellor, 113, 133, 246
Harley, Robert, Earl of Oxford, 95, 113, 133
character, 102, 164, 165
deprived of office, 120
hopes of advancement, 134
hatred of Bolingbroke, 160
trial of, 165, 246
Harvey, Lord, 272
Haversham, Lord, 81
Heister, General von, 87
Hell Fire Club, 327
Henrietta Maria, Queen, 17
Henriette, Princess, 18
Henry the Lion, Duke of Hanover, 3
L'Hermitage, Electoral Envoy, 256
Herrenhausen, Palace of, 10, 115
Hesse-Cassel, Emilie de, 26
Landgrave of, 64, 263
Holland, 53, 77, 106
Holstein-Gotterp, Duke of, 78, 96, 212
House of Commons, character, 246
grants to foreigners, 92, 144
resolutions, 72, 83, 87, 308
Howe, Mr., Envoy to Hanover, 82
Lord and Lady, 289
Hozier, Admiral, 363
Hudson Bay, 105

d'Iberville, French Envoy, 241
Iburg, 14
Ilten, von, 39, 108, 118
Impeachments, 161, 162, 170
Ireland, coinage, 342
viceroyalty, 228, 236, 237
Islay, Earl of, 206, 234, 347
Italy, 216

Jacobites, plot, 319
risings: 1715, 172, 175, 177 *et seq.*, 268; 1709, 168; 1719, 263
severity towards, 200, 201
trials of, 193, 194, 195
James II., King, 19, 51, 53, 69, 77, 200
birth of son, 51
character, 49, 50, 52
James Francis Edward, James III., Old Pretender, 1, 51, 69, 89, 111, 112, 129, 171, 177, 183, 185, 268, 273
character, 166, 167, 170, 184, 186, 189, 190, 191, 193, 377
Court, 165, 192
Jekyll, Sir Joseph, 308
John Frederick, Duke, 5, 7, 25, 34
Junto, German, 219, 223, 256, 284, 292, 360

Kendal, Duchess of, 140, 145, 146, 207, 232, 281, 282, 292, 293, 335
Kenmare, Earl of, 177, 182, 195, 196, 198, 199
Kerr of Kersland, 143, 350
Kilmansegge, Baroness von, *v.* Darlington, Countess
King, Archbishop, 345, 346
Knesebach, Fräulein von, 45
Knight, Secretary to South Sea Company, 310
Königsmark, Aurora von, 40
Charles John, von, 39
Philippe Christopher, von, 36, 38, 39, 40, 44, 90
Kreyenberg, Hanoverian Resident, 123

Law, John, 295
Layer, Christopher, 320
Lechmere, Solicitor-General, 204
Leeds, Duke of, 173
Legislation, limiting the Peerage, 280, 288, 290, 291, 292
occasional Conformists, 287
relief of Nonconformists, 286
Schism Act, 119, 287
Leibnitz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 67, 70, 79, 82, 83, 107, 108, 156
Leine Palace, 39
Leszezynski, Stanislaus, 210
Lexington, Lord, 40, 54
Livry, l'Abbé, 353
Lockhart of Carnsworth, 109, 114, 120, 178, 262, 305
Lockyer, Dean, 16
London, 380, 381
Louis XIV., King of France, 54, 56, 72, 93, 129, 168, 169, 172, 215, 220
XV., King of France, 210, 218, 353
Lund, letters, 38, 41
Luis, Don, King of Spain, 352, 356
Luxembourg, Duke of, 59

Macclesfield, Earl of, 72, 74, 294
Lord Chancellor, 347, 348
Mackay, General, 58
Maclean, Sir John, 176
Mahomet, Turkish servant, 56, 141, 300
Manton, Doctor, 111
Mar, Earl of, 173, 175, 179, 182, 183, 186, 187, 190, 192
Marischal, Keith, Earl, 125, 185, 262
Markc, Comte de la, 241
Marlborough, Duke of, 77, 92, 95, 100, 102, 123, 135, 163
diplomatic skill, 83, 84
victories, 85, 89
George jealous of him, 88, 91
dismissal, 103
correspondence with James, 110, 173
death, 317
Mary, Queen, 21, 51, 53, 54, 64
Masham, Abigail, 94, 95
Matilda, wilfe of Henry the Lion, 3
Matthews, execution, 383
Maximilian of Bavaria, 58
Maximilian, son of Electress Sophia, 62, 63
Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Elector of, 216
Meissingen, C. von, 14
Clara Elizabeth von, 15
Maria Catherine von, 15, 42
Merci, Count, 87, 91
Methuen, Paul, 207, 236, 243, 251
Minorca, 105, 270
Mist's Journal, 378
Modena, Mary of, Queen of James II., 51, 193
Mohun, Lord, 74
Moltke, Graf von, 62
Molyneux, Mr., 117
Mustapha, 56, 141, 300

Nairne, Lady, 198
Nassau, Prince of, 58

National apathy towards Jacobites, 158, 182
characteristics, 169, 326
conditions, 302, 307
debts, 53, 296
disaffection towards Government, 201, 280
Newcastle, Duke of, 80, 204, 244, 277, 278, 282, 283
Newfoundland, 105
Nithsdale, Lady, 198
Lord, 182, 195
Norris, Admiral, 214, 264
Northern War, 230
Nottingham, Earl of, 123, 134, 197, 204
Nova Scotia, 105

Oldmixon, historian, 104
Onslow, Lord, 71, 205, 226, 288, 291, 316
Orleans, Duchess of, *v.* Elizabeth Charlotte
correspondence with Electress, 30, 371
Ormonde, Duke of, 128, 133, 158, 172, 260, 261
appointed Commander-in-Chief, 103
impeached, 162
flight, 171
commands Jacobite forces, 176, 177
second attempt, 185
Osnabrück, 14, 368
Bishop of, 14
Ostend Company, 350, 361
Oxford, Earl of, *v.* Harley
University, 21, 22, 149

Pains and Penalties, Bill of, 320, 321
Palatinate, refugees from, 92
Parliament, 77, 100, 242
corruption, 157, 204, 329, 330
dissolution of, 80, 95, 156, 328
Septennial Act, 203
Triennial Act, 202, 205
Passarovich, Peace of, 258
Patkul, John Reinhold, 210
Peace of Ryswick, 65
of Travendale, 78
Peers, purchasing votes of, 113
Penteriedter, Baron, 256
Peter the Czar, 209, 223, 241, 254, 260, 264, 335
Peterborough, Lord, 173
Petkum, Holstein Resident, 96
Peyna, capture of, 78
Philippe of France, *v.* Regent.
of Spain, 72, 218, 249, 250, 253, 267, 352
Phipps, Sir Constantine, 149, 200
Platen, Countess, 15, 37, 39, 40, 41, 147
Poland, 210
Polignac, Abbé de, 97
Pollnitz, Charles Louis von, 130, 296
Polwarth, Lord, 116, 118, 339
Pope, Clement VII., 167
poet, 313, 373
Popish Plot, 20
Porto Bello, 363
Pretender, Old, James III., 105, 305
character, 1
description, 1, 166
expulsion, 221
proclamation by, 129
Pretender, Young, 319
Prior, Matthew, 97, 99, 102, 161, 167
Pulteney, 243, 245, 360
Pyrmont, 208

Quadruple Alliance, 255, 256, 366
Quarrels in Royal Family, 233, 277, 278
in the Whig Party, 231, 235, 243, 244, 245, 338

Radnor, Lord, 157
de Rapin-Thoyras, 104
Raugraf, Karl Ludwig, 55
Raugräfin Louise, 107
Regent, Philippe of France, 176, 185, 217, 251, 267, 295
death, 353
his character, 218, 257
proposed abduction, 260
Regents and Regency Act, 82, 123
Religious conditions of British nation, 327
Ripperdà, Spanish Envoy, 97, 252, 254, 351, 361, 364
Rivers, Lord, 99
Robethon, Jean, 99, 116, 118, 141, 143, 245, 255, 284
Rupert, Prince, 20
Russia, 217

St. Christophe Island, 105, 232
St. Simon, Duc de, 39, 219
Sardinia, 253, 254
Saussure, visit to England, 140
Schaub, Envoy to France, 333, 339
Schulenberg, Ermengarda von, *v.* Duchess Kendal
Schutz, Ambassador, 79, 113, 114, 116
Chancellor, 29, 106
Scotland, 347
Malt Tax, 346
Scott, poet, the "Remembrance," 89

Scotti, Marquis, 267
Shaftesbury, Earl of, 20
Shippen, Mr., 128
Shrewsbury, Duchess of, 40
Duke of, 95, 122, 123, 135, 173
Sicily, 105, 254, 257
seizure of, 258
Sidney, Henry, 21
Smallpox, inoculation for, 380
Sobieski, John, 261
Social deterioration, 302, 316, 369
Solms, Count, 58
Somers, Lord, 93, 155, 163
Somerset, Duke of, 135
Sophia Charlotte, Electress of Brandenberg, 69, 70, 370
Sophia Dorothea, wife of George I., 23, 35, 39, 47, 67
birth, 28
character, 41, 43
divorce, 45
imprisonment, 46
parentage, 26, 27
Sophia Dorothea, daughter of above, 67, 335, 338
Sophia, Electress of Hanover, 3, 34, 41, 44, 47, 48, 66, 68, 69, 70, 78, 79, 80, 106, 107, 108, 113, 281
birth, 12
character, 10 *seq.*
Court of, 116
death, 17, 117, 118
her children, 17
letters of, 17, 55, 60, 371
marriage, 9
parentage, 6
religion, 15, 16, 74
wooing, 7
South Sea Company, 297, 301, 302, 306, 307
Bubble, 303, 305
directors, 309, 311
Spain, 98, 249, 252, 333
succession to throne, 72
Spanheim, Ezekiel de, 23
Stair, Earl of, 161, 165, 180, 185, 193, 213, 218, 219, 235, 253, 257
Stanhope, Lord, 135, 162, 163, 180, 217, 245, 257, 285, 289
letters, 121, 231, 242
Secretary of State, 135
negotiates Triple Alliance, 220, 221
Quadruple Alliance, 267, 271
character, 226
Stanhope, Charles, 311
Starenberg, Count, 354
Statues in London, 381
Steele, Sir Richard, 290
Steinghens, Baron, 75, 156
Stepney, George, 50, 64, 70
Stormont, Lord, 262
Strafford, Lord, 159, 162, 171
Succession to English throne, 105, 107
Act of Parliament, 72, 75
Suffolk, Lady, 281
Sunderland, Lord, 123, 236, 285, 288, 299, 343
dismissed by Queen Anne, 95
character, 227, 228
letter to Townshend, 231
complicity in South Sea scandals, 311, 314
Sweden, 209, 210, 214, 264, 333
Swift, 100, 102, 120, 344, 346, 370, 374
Draper's letters, 343, 345

Tallard, Marshal, 97
Taxation, 302
Tennyson, Bishop, 80, 148
Thynne, Thomas, of Longleat, 39
Tickle, John, poet, 132
Tindal, Nicolas, 99, 104, 136
Toland, 10, 73, 74, 138
Torcy, Marquis de, 96, 97, 218
Tories, 80, 81, 95, 109, 122, 128, 156, 159, 160
Torres, Count de las, 365
Townshend, Lord, 106, 197, 230, 315, 334
character, 224
dismissal, 231, 235, 242
First Minister, 135
opposes Stanhope, 298
Treaties, Amsterdam, 242
Barrier, 106, 215
France, 222, 230
Hanover, 359
Quadruple Alliance, 255
Nystad, 333, 335
Ryswick, 65
Spain, 333
Utrecht, 96, 103, 105
Vienna, 354, 355, 358
Trevor, Lord, 133
Triennial Act, 202, 205
Triple Alliance, 252, 255
Treaty of, 237
Tullibardine, Marquis of, 175, 262
Turkish valets, 55, 56, 141, 152, 153, 154
Turks, invasion by, 55

United Provinces, 215, 236
d'Ursins, Princesse, 257
Utrecht, Treaty of, 96, 103, 105
d'Uxelles, Maréchal, 97, 257

Vendome, Maréchal Duc de, 249
Venice, 7

Verden, Bishopric of, 131, 211
Victoria, Queen, 42, 385
Vienna, Court of, 86, 103
  Siege of, 55
  Treaty, 354
Villars, Maréchal, 86, 89
Vrillière, Marquis de la, 335, 341

Wade, General, 237, 347
Wake, Archbishop, 281, 282, 288, 299
Waldeck, Count de, 20
Walpole, Horace, 139, 193
  brother, 229, 230, 235, 282, 340
Walpole, Sir Robert, 161, 197, 233, 291, 298, 347
  Paymaster of Forces, 135, 301
  intercourse with the King, 152, 243
  character, 225, 235, 338, 379
  methods of corruption, 312, 315, 329, 380
  personal canvass at Election, 330
  South Sea Bubble, 331
Walters, Lucy, 13
Walton, Captain, 259
Wartburg, Franz von, 14
Westphalia, Peace of, 13
Wharton, Duke of, 135, 163
  son of above, 309, 310, 326, 366
Whigs, 80, 81, 100, 102, 104, 106, 109, 154, 155, 221, 243, 298, 330, 331, 376
Widdrington, Lord, 181, 195
Wightman, General, 178, 182
Wilhelmina, Princess, 335, 336, 337, 364
Wilhelmsburg, Countess von, 30
William III., King, 21, 50 *seq.*, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 109, 286
  courage, 59
  designs, 19, 33, 75, 76, 79
Wills, General, 181
Winchelsea, Lord, 79
Wintoun, Lord, 195, 199, 200
Wolfenbüttel, Dukes of, 283
  Duke Augustus Frederic, 28, 32
  Duke Anton Ulric, 28, 37, 62
  expedition against, 78
Women, education, 325, 371
Wood's halfpence, 342, 346
Wortley Montagu, Lady Mary, 43, 139, 142, 276, 296, 330, 369
Writ of Summons to House of Lords, 113
Wyndham, Sir William, 176, 318

York, Duke of, *v.* James II.
  Ernest Augustus, 207, 368
Young, Dean, 287

Zell, *v.* Celle
Zinzendorf, Count von, 297, 354

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